

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY

KEEPING THE VALLEY FED, WARM, SUPPORTED & CONNECTED





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Walk-in hours vary; please call ahead

WELCOME

to our 2024 Annual Report!

Within these pages, you'll find stats and stories illustrating the work we do at Community Action Pioneer Valley to keep our neighbors fed, warm, supported and connected. I hope that reading it will leave you as proud of these hardworking staff as I am. As many of you know, I will be retiring this summer, and while I'm very excited about my future of book reading and dog walking, I'm going to miss this work.

It has been nearly fourteen eventful years. During those years we've seen recessions and booms; a global pandemic and recovery effort; the sharpest rise in homelessness since the 1980s and the widening gulf between the comfortable and the struggling.

We have seen the need only grow. As a Community Action Agency, we provide programs and services for people living with low incomes, along with over 1,000 other Community Action Agencies across the country. We all weave together multiple funding streams including federal, state, and local grants and contracts. And thanks to the over 200 donors to CAPV, we are able to fill some of the many gaps that remain.

These pages also show the faces of our staff and participants as they work together, to reach their goals, to improve our communities, and to create a better future for their children. Every one of our staff brings their heart to this often uplifting and sometimes heartbreaking work; we are grateful for them. Our Board brings their hearts as well, and I am grateful for their guidance and insights. They all truly live the words of Community Action's founding leader Sargent Shriver, "What can change the world today is the same thing that has changed it in the past – an idea and the service of dedicated, committed individuals to that idea."



With hope and tremendous gratitude, CLARE



I joined the board because I'm always looking for ways to help my neighbors and give back to the community that supported me when I needed it most.

I'm proud to represent the work Community Action does to keep our neighbors housed, fed, warm, working, learning, and connected to community.

— Charity Day,
CAPV Board President



COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY

Access ■ Opportunity ■ Community

MISSION

Community Action Pioneer Valley assists people who have low incomes to achieve economic stability and security. We work to build communities in which all people have the opportunity to thrive.



VISION

Our vision is a community that celebrates our shared humanity as well as our diversity. We strive to build a community that invests in access for everyone to healthy food; safe, affordable housing; living wage work; high quality, affordable education from birth; and full participation in the democratic process. In service to that vision, Community Action Pioneer Valley relies on the leadership of people who have low incomes to define how we approach our work. We advocate for policies and resources that protect the vulnerable and disenfranchised, and open opportunity to all. Working with many partners, we create a community where children and youth are nurtured and protected, and everyone achieves their potential and prospers in the fullness of life.

VALUES

- We see people as the experts on their own lives, as individuals and families who have strengths and dreams, and who also experience barriers to their success.
- We honor everyone's right to live with dignity and to be treated with respect and appreciation for diversity.
- We partner with individuals and families to develop the resources, skills, social connection, and resilience to be economically secure and successful according to their own values and hopes.
- We partner with families and communities to raise strong and healthy children and youth.
- We value workplace practices based on mutual respect, inclusion, transparency, and leadership development for all staff.
- We believe that engaging people with low incomes in decision-making and the overall direction of the agency is essential to our integrity and success.
- We are committed to participating in community development that assures that all people are housed, well-fed, warm, safe, and stable.
- We value building collaborative partnerships to find community-based solutions to meet community needs.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES & ADVOCACY

CR&A is the front door of Community Action Pioneer Valley. Many people's first contact with Community Action happens here, through emails and phone calls looking for help. Resource Advocates can tell people where to find help, and assist them with some applications for benefits. Here are a few stories of people we've helped keep fed, housed and warm.



Lucinda Gonzalez is a single mother of two who went back to school to become a clinician and pursue a career that could support her family. Lucinda experienced unexpected medical issues which meant she had to take an extended medical leave, leaving her with too many bills that she couldn't pay. Though her electric was already shut off when she came to us for help, we were able to process her request within the day and she did not lose the precious food that was in her fridge. After she had been turned away from many other agencies, she was thankful for both our assistance and caring.

Jenisa is a single mother who works at a nursing home in Greenfield full time.

She got COVID so many times at her job that she ran out of sick time and had to take some unpaid days, leaving her to choose between her rent and utilities. She chose to pay rent, thinking she would be protected by the winter utility shutoff protection - but in fact, she was not. She tried calling the utility company to get her utilities restored but was unsuccessful and they indicated that they would not turn her utilities back on without a payment of over \$1000. A CR&A advocate called the utility company with her and got her back on the financial hardship program and protected from being shut off for the rest of the season. More than that, CR&A re-established her food stamps and assisted her with her Fuel Assistance application to increase benefits and prevent similar things from occurring in the future.

A part time student at UMASS working full time to support herself through school couldn't make ends meet when her hours got cut after the semester ended. Rather than having to go through the summer months without hot showers and the ability to cook on her stove, Community Resources & Advocacy funds were able to fund an oil delivery until she returned to full time employment in the fall.

In 2024, we launched a quick survey form on our website for community members to request assistance from CR&A. **Hundreds of people used this tool to reach out to the program for resources.**

Top 3 reasons people call us:
housing, fuel assistance, utilities

2,779 Calls requesting assistance from CR&A

CENTER FOR SELF-RELIANCE

We let shoppers choose their own produce, groceries, and frozen meat five days a week. We also deliver food to people's homes. We strive to carry culturally appropriate food for many different communities.



Community support for the Center for Self-Reliance food pantries comes in all sorts of ways – even Zamboni rides!



FUEL ASSISTANCE IS VITAL:

we help people pay for a portion of their heating bills each winter, whether they use gas, electric, propane, kerosene, wood, or pellet stoves.

In 2024 we served:

7,379
total
households

586
children
under 5

1,447
first time
applicants

\$8,966,590
Fuel Assistance
dollars
distributed
throughout our
local heating
economy

\$30,147
average
income of
household

4,526
elders

4,373
households
who heat with
deliverable
fuel like oil or
propane

2,921
disabled
people

13,496
individuals

1,805
households
at or below
poverty level

ENERGY, HEATING SYSTEM & HOME REPAIRS

CAPV's Energy Programs reduce people's energy usage by making free major improvements to their homes. Some examples include insulation, weatherstripping, air-sealing, and installing energy-efficient heating systems. We also make other improvements to help keep some people safely in their homes.

RACHEL'S STORY:

Community Action is the reason that my family was able to stay in our home, city and schools. I was faced with multi-faceted, overwhelming house issues; poor to non-existent insulation, a failing roof with leaks destroying the 2nd floor ceilings, rot along the outside siding, windows so drafty they rattled in the wind, and a 60 year old oil burning heating system that was original to the house.

There was simply no way for me to get ahead of it as a low-income single mom of three kids.

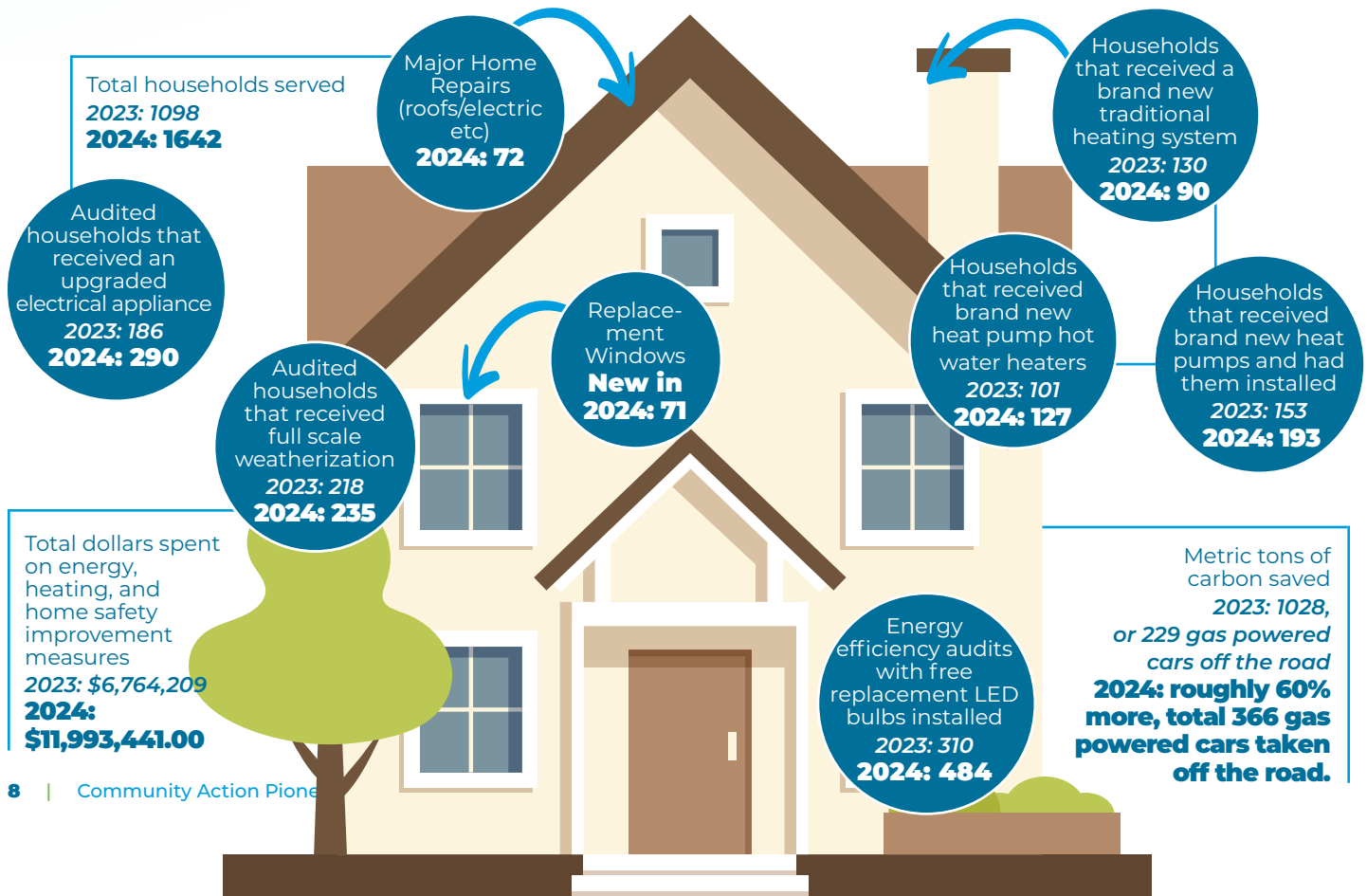
Like a social worker for my house, Community Action sprung into action and sketched out a plan to address all these weighty problems through either providing services to me directly or facilitating ser-

vices from other programs.

The entire time a Community Action point person was there to guide the process, answer my questions, and communicate with contractors for me .

Here's the best part: every Community Action worker was kind, thoughtful, respectful and knowledgeable. To have all that major work done with minimal stress on my family and me is priceless.

We are forever grateful to CAPV for not only allowing us to be able to stay in our home and community but for modeling that our community cares and values us. Sometimes it takes a village to help a family and for us that village was CAPV.



FAMILY CENTER

The Family Center is a bright and bustling place where programs come together to serve the families of Franklin County. We are a welcoming vibrant hub for families with children & youth (0-18) to come for fun, learning and support. We offer play groups, parent ed classes, life skills workshops, support groups, family events and individual support.

As a Family Resource Center we connect family members to needed resources and services. We provide specialized support to youth and families with children struggling at home or in school.



“Como padre de familia me encanta el playgroup. Los niños han aprendido mucho.”

“Staff is always helpful and friendly. The relationships we have built with staff and other families is wonderful. It feels like a second family and support network.”

“The best playgroup to go to around.”

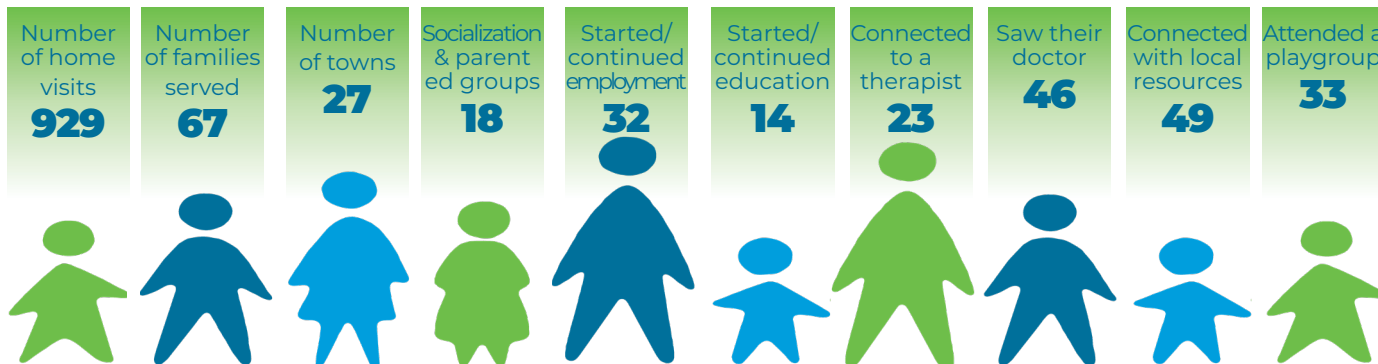
“We are so grateful for all the resources and support you provide to our family!”

“Material is well thought out. Always something fun and different.”

“Amazing playgroup! So educational and interactive with both children and parents!”

HEALTHY FAMILIES

Sends skilled staff into homes to work with first time young parents (under 24) throughout Franklin & Hampshire Counties and the North Quabbin Region.



WIC

We help families buy fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, cheese and bread if a parent is pregnant, postpartum (chest/breastfeeding or non-chest/breastfeeding) or has a child under 5. We pair this support with nutrition education for parents.

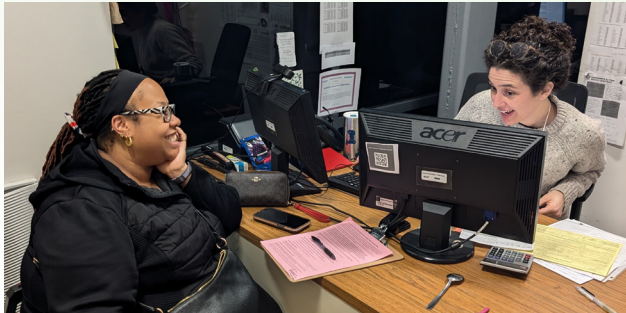
WIC HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024:

- Handed out over 400 Farmers Market coupons to WIC participants at the Greenfield, Orange, Florence, Easthampton Farmers Markets, and at our WIC Amherst WIC office.
- In June, we passed our program audit with a score of 97%.
- 4 staff attended WIC's 50th Anniversary Celebration.



MONEY MATTERS & VITA

At Money Matters, we help people achieve financial stability through one-on-one support, education and accountability. Our signature summer program is Save Up Summer. During tax season, we train local volunteers to prepare people’s income tax returns for free and run tax clinics through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.



SPOTLIGHT: SAVE UP SUMMER!

CAPV’s saving program connects participants with \$400 when they meet a personal savings goal over several months. Money Matters staff provide structure and support, and the group meets for three educational workshops.

This year we brought together our largest cohort of participants ever! Thanks to funding from Greenfield Savings Bank and collaboration with other CAPV departments, we were able to expand from Franklin to include Hampshire County. We also partnered with CAPV Youth and Workforce Development and the CAPV Family Center to bring people on board.

The group that met at CAPV’s Family Center was treated to dinner and provided with bilingual childcare, perks many participants and their kids loved. This year everyone who joined us brought a huge amount of knowledge and real-life experience to the table. Peer support was a major highlight.

Together our group provides accountability, community and increased shared knowledge. Many participants this year found themselves in transition: going to college, getting full time jobs, moving into housing from a shelter, or starting to make plans to pay off big debts. We loved hearing that this year people will have a less stressful holiday buying gifts, furniture and household necessities.

We can’t wait to see how we can make next year even better!

Save up Summer	2023	2024
# of clients completing program	5	13
amount received 2023: \$400/each 2024: \$400/each	\$400/each	\$400/each
VITA	2023	2024
# of taxpayers served	490	637
average taxpayer income	\$18,748	\$17,756
average refund	\$2,161	\$2,276
# of volunteer tax preparers	28	38
\$ returned to the community	\$1,058,688	\$1,320,131

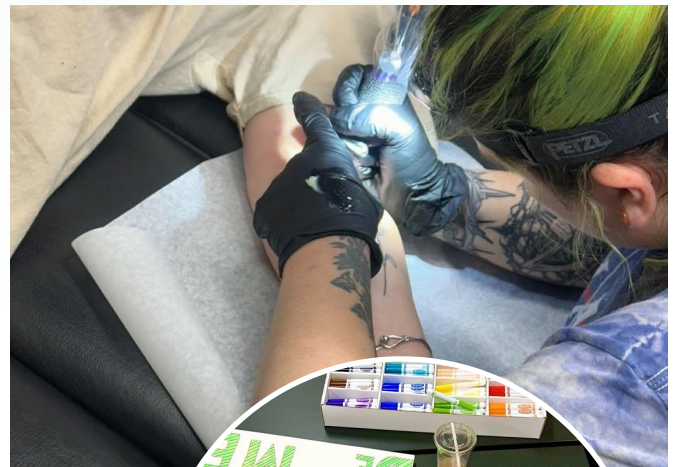
YOUTH AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our Youth and Workforce Development programs help young people find their place in their communities. We offer support and leadership development opportunities for LGBTQIA+ youth.

We create space for youth & young adults to come together to improve our community through programs like Shout Out! and our Youth Action Board. We work one-on-one with young people to help them identify and reach their career and education goals.

KYLEE'S STORY:

In 2018, I was involved in the Summer Jobs and Beyond Program at Turners Falls High School. Through that program, I had a paid internship at a local tattoo studio. That studio then hired me and supported me in becoming an apprentice. Just recently I got my license to tattoo. Community Action helped my dream become a reality and helped me network my way into the tattoo industry and meet incredible artists and like-minded people. Community Action helped me find my sense of purpose in life.



Our programs are GROWING!

Individuals served in LGBTQ Programs
2023: 46
2024: 90

Individuals served in Youth Council & Low Barrier Case Management (Activism group)
2023: 92
2024: 128

Leadership Development Stipends amount of money in youth hands
2024: \$42k+

Individuals served through YAB (Youth Action Board)
2023: 41
2024: 58

RSVP/HEALTHY BONES & BALANCE

RSVP is the volunteer connector for people 55+ in the Valley. The program, part of AmeriCorps Seniors makes thoughtful matches between skilled community members and organizations that need their help. RSVP's signature volunteer-led exercise program, Healthy Bones & Balance, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2024!

"Leaders are great. Besides always providing clear instruction, they foster camaraderie and humor."

"I am a lot stronger because of the exercises we do. It's easier to do day to day chores."

"Since taking this class my balance and strength have greatly increased. I can hike with 30 yr olds and catch myself without falling! At my last bone density test my Dr. said, "If I didn't know that you are NOT taking meds, I would have said the meds are working. Keep up what you are doing." I feel lucky to be able to attend this class."

"I can't say enough about this class! I have so many examples: I can lift my suitcase into the overhead bin on the plane without needing help (couldn't do that before I started the class) so I no longer worry about that as I'm waiting to board; I was falling (some bad falls but no broken bones) 1-2 times a year before class, now I haven't fallen for 2 years and when I trip I can easily find my balance to prevent a fall; I can carry heavy grocery bags, etc. while climbing the 5 flights of stairs to my condo; I truly believe I have improved my quality of life physically and mentally as well as probably extending my life span. I look forward to the classes and rarely miss one."

13% of HBB attendees have attended class for 10 years or more
(Lots of new participants - 92 people joined in the last year!)

27 HBB exercise class community sites



9% of HBB attendees ages 90+

86% of HBB attendees made friends or built on existing friendships

HEAD START & EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Dear Families, Colleagues, Friends, Community Leaders and Supporters,

I am very pleased to share our 2023-2024 Annual Report with you, and I hope you will enjoy reading about our work with the youngest children and families in Franklin, Hampshire and Western Hampden counties. From my perspective, here are some important highlights. First, the programmatic changes we implemented resulted in a smaller, but more vibrant, program. The significant staff salary increases allowed us to become almost completely staffed and fully enrolled. Our smaller classroom sizes and lower caseloads for Family Advocates have increased the quality of our work with children and families, and we were able to open an additional classroom for infants and toddlers at our Westfield site. Speaking of Westfield – in early September 2024, the Office of Head Start approved our \$10M application to purchase land and build a beautiful new Head Start site there, and construction will begin in the spring of 2025. This new 16,000 square foot center will be able to serve over 100 Western Hampden County infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families!

Speaking of families, we are grateful for our ever-deepening relationships with families and our wonderful parent leaders, for their roles on Policy Council as well as at Family Meetings. It has been a delight to work in partnership with our Policy Council Chair, Alena Bartoli, whose words are also included in this report. Finally, as always, all the good that happens at Head Start and Early Learning Programs happens because of our dedicated, passionate, hard-working, experienced and skilled staff. Thank you, thank you, thank you all, for doing the most important work of building relationships and supporting the young children and families in our communities.

***Humbly, and with gratitude, always,
Anat Weisenfreund, Director
Head Start & Early Learning Programs***

Dear Parents, Staff and Community,

I'm writing as we close the 2023-24 year, my second year as Policy Council Chair and my son's third year in the Head Start program.

After cuts to transportation funding for the last fiscal year, my son transferred from the Easthampton classroom to Head Start @ Home. Our home visitor worked hard over the past year to engage him as he grows. Deirdre has been a great source of support for me as I navigate solo parenting.

As my family gained greater stability, I was able to support Policy Council as a space for parent representatives to communicate site needs and to advise as we develop and maintain program policies. I'm proud to say that in addition to having parent reps from every site, we also met attendance requirements for every meeting. Acting on the initiative of our reps, we worked with administration to implement changes in selection criteria and parent-teacher communications and increased our Parent Activity

Fund budget by 50%. Our parents traveled all over the country from Washington, DC to New Orleans to Boston, advocating and learning on behalf of our program and families.

Writing at the beginning of my third term as PC chair, my goals for the 2024-25 year include:

- supporting our parent representatives to set goals for themselves and their sites,
- supporting the integration of responses to the climate crisis into our programming,
- and recruiting and preparing a leadership team for next year's Policy Council

We achieved a great deal during the past year, and I look forward to being present with you as we achieve together in the coming year.

***Warm regards,
Alena Bartoli
Policy Council Chair***



Anat Weisenfreund and Alena Bartoli



POLICY COUNCIL

Head Start Parent Members

- Alena Bartoli (Chair)
- Yashira Baez
- Deana Currie
- Natacha Flores
- Heather Frotten
- Caitlin Martin
- Mirasia McGahan
- Sierra Nester
- Jennifer Ribardi (Vice Chair)
- James Torrey, Sr.
- Melissa Winot

Community Members

- Cathi Erland-Flynn, MA
Department of Children and Families (Secretary/Treasurer)
- Nicole Lyman, Valuing Our Children
- Lewis Metaxas, Community Action Board Representative
- Sarah Patton, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- Robin Sudlow, REACH Early Intervention

The Head Start Policy Council partners in shared governance with the CAPV Board of Directors.

OUR HISTORY

Head Start has served our region for nearly sixty years, providing early education and care alongside a wide range of services for very low-income pregnant parents, infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families. Our service area spans nearly 1,600 square miles in the Pioneer Valley and includes three mostly rural and semi-rural counties from the border of Vermont to the border of Connecticut. In 2023-24 we operated eight center-based sites with locations and hours based on community needs, as well as our Head Start at Home home visiting program that spans our whole service area. Our work is rooted in the Brazelton Touchpoints Approach (TM) and deep relationships formed among staff and families.

OUR MISSION

We partner with families in all that we do and believe that parents are the experts on their children. Together, we build a solid foundation for resilient and resourceful caregivers; caring, confident, and curious children; and responsive, invested communities.

OUR PROGRAM GOALS

In 2023-2024 we launched a new five-year grant cycle with a set of goals that are rooted in our work so far. Our goals highlight our values and priorities as we aim, always, to enhance and strengthen our work. These goals are deeply related to our School Readiness Goals and all support children and families being ready for school and for life.



Access & Program Design: Based on community needs and workforce realities, we will design and implement a program structure that will ensure full enrollment and maximize quality.



Workforce: Because stable relationships with highly competent caregivers are essential to child development and to partnership with families, we will invest in strategies to increase wages, decrease turnover, and enhance the experience of working at HS & ELP.



Relationships: Because development occurs at the intersection of relationships between children, families, and program staff, we will deepen partnerships with parents and caregivers and enhance resources to help their children thrive.



Health & Safety: Because health is a foundation for school readiness, we will improve children's up to date health and dental status and support nutrition and physical well-being in our settings.



ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

Community Action Pioneer Valley learns about our region using data from the Census and other sources, surveys of participants and service providers, and the first-hand knowledge of community members including leaders on our Policy Council and Board of Directors. We use this information to make decisions about our program’s locations, hours, and services as well as which children and families are most in need of Head Start and Early Head Start. Our most recent Community Needs Assessment was completed in summer 2023 and updated in winter 2023. It found:

- There is only enough licensed child care and pre-K capacity in our region to serve about two-thirds of all young children, with particular challenges in rural areas
- Child poverty rates in our region rose from 2021 to 2022, particularly in Franklin County
- Rising costs of housing, utilities, and food have put additional burdens on families
- Homelessness among pre-K to 12 students in 2022-23 was striking in some communities, particularly Greenfield, West Springfield, and Orange, due in part to an influx of refugee families with children
- Transportation remains a major barrier to accessing services and can reinforce families’ isolation
- Children’s experiences during the past several years have had lasting impacts on their development

Even as we’ve faced these challenges, we have witnessed incredible resilience from our communities over the course of the pandemic years, and families have rallied together to help each other in difficult times.

Serving Our Community

Children and expectant parents are eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start services based on their age (birth to age 3 for EHS and 2 years 9 months to age 5 for HS) and their income (at or below the Federal Poverty Level, which was \$31,200 for a family of four in 2024). Children are also eligible if they are in foster care, they are homeless, or their families receive public assistance. We are able to enroll about one in twelve low-income children who are potentially eligible for Head Start, so we prioritize among applicants to serve the children and families most in need of support.

In 2023-2024, Community Action Pioneer Valley’s Head Start and Early Learning Programs (HS & ELP) provided services to 141 infants and toddlers and 5 pregnant women in Early Head Start from 133 families and 252 preschoolers in Head Start from 230 families.

As a result of labor shortages and hiring challenges that impacted the early childhood field since the COVID-19 pandemic began, HS & ELP began this school year on an Underenrollment Plan. Thanks to our Change in Scope and hard work across the program, we were on average 88% enrolled in Early Head Start and 87% enrolled in Head Start during the months when all program options were open—significant improvement and progress toward our 97% target!

OUR SERVICES

At Head Start & Early Learning Programs, our staff partner with each family to learn about their resources, needs, and goals. Specialists in family services, health, nutrition, mental health, and disabilities provide direct support and connections to community resources to help each family with what they want to achieve.

Mental Health

Our team of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants (IECMHCs) partnered with families, educators, home visitors, and other program staff to support 115 children during the 2023-24 school year. They were also involved in updating our Case Management Guide to enhance and implement our system for supporting children, families, and classrooms. As one staff member reflected during Mental Health Awareness Month, "I think about all the ways children develop and the relationships they make early on in their lives, how important each interaction is to support a child's brain development. Seeing children building trusting relationships and learning how to self-regulate is foundational. Being part of the process here at HS & ELP and seeing how we support families and staff is meaningful work and a gift."

Disability Services

During the 2023-24 school year, 61 infants and toddlers (43%) and 67 preschoolers (27%) received support for a disability or developmental delay through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP). Since the COVID pandemic, we've experienced a higher rate of children in need of these supports. Our Disabilities Team, along with IECMHCs, worked closely with classrooms to increase the meaningful inclusion of children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities and developmental delays across all settings.

Family Services

Each family's experience at HS & ELP is built on a foundation of relationships, and one essential relationship is with their Home Visitor or Family Advocate! Through a dialogue about strengths, needs, and resources, the family gets support to set personal goals and access community resources. In 2023-2024, some of the most common goals families set included earning a GED or enrolling in higher education, supporting a child's transition to preschool or kindergarten, and engaging in fun learning activ-



ities with children at home and in the community. This year, 98% of Head Start and 95% of Early Head Start families received family services customized to their circumstances.

Health

Our health team works to support children's holistic health and well-being, but we have faced some prolonged challenges since the COVID pandemic. While 100% of children had medical homes and 97% of Head Start children and 77% of Early Head Start children had dental homes by the end of the year, there were barriers to staying fully up to date on the state's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) schedule. EPSDT requires a lengthy series of physicals, dental exams, vaccines, and screenings, with new events constantly coming due. By the end of the year, 20% of Early Head Start children and 31% of Head Start children were fully up to date. We have a focus on improving these numbers in our Program Goals, and new efforts will be put in place during the upcoming school year.

Nutrition

Our program set out this year to enhance our work providing locally-sourced, healthy food to all children. Over the course of the year we increased sourcing fruits, vegetables, and other foods from local farmers' markets; began making purees for our youngest children from fresh produce; and won a Massachusetts FRESH grant that provided resources and training to our nutrition staff! As in all areas, we partner closely with families—in nutrition we work to embed cultural diversity in menus and celebrate food that is meaningful to our children and families.

SCHOOL READINESS MISSION

Head Start & Early Learning Programs seek to build a foundation for lifelong learning. We work with families and the community so that children can develop caring relationships, confidence, and curiosity. Caring, confident, and curious children are ready for school.



School Readiness Goals

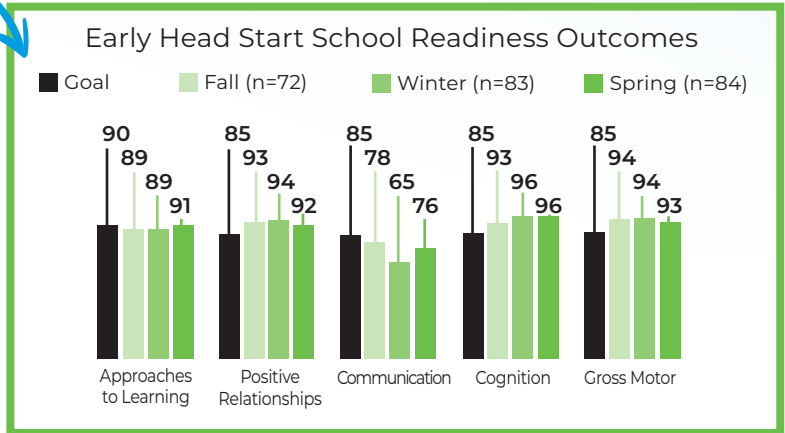
HS & ELP has School Readiness Goals about children's learning and development in these areas:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language/Communication
- Cognition (separated into Math and Science for preschoolers)
- Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
- Attendance

We integrate data on learning and development in these areas with our holistic knowledge of the children in our program and their needs. We study how children's attendance, primary languages, classroom features, disability status, and more relate to their progress over time. Classroom quality is measured with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and children's progress is tracked using the Teaching Strategies GOLD system.

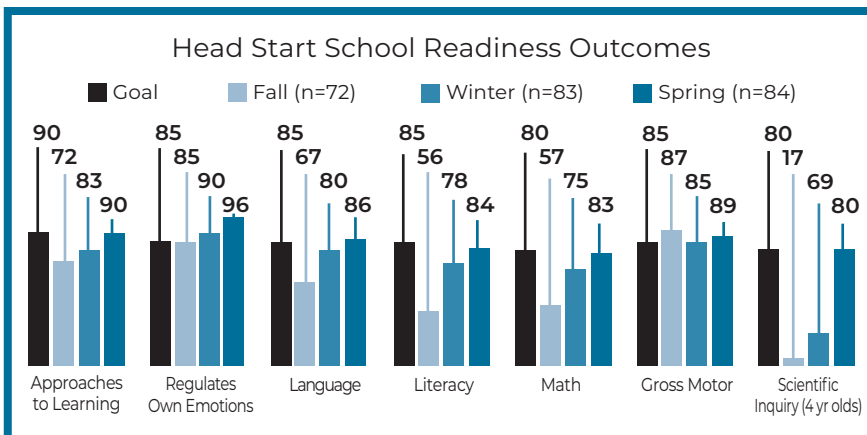
Early Head Start Outcomes

Infants and toddlers develop and change rapidly, so each child is measured against different expectations at different times through the year. The chart at right compares the proportion of children who were meeting or exceeding their age-appropriate expectations at each point in time in each domain of our School Readiness Goals. Children started the year strong, and we met or exceeded most of our goals! Regular reflection on our data helps to strategize for additional resources and approaches when needed.



Head Start Outcomes

In Head Start, each child is held to the same expectations throughout the year. While some children may leave during the year or new children enroll, numbers are more easily compared over time. Again, the graph shows our School Readiness Goals in comparison to children's progress at meeting and exceeding age-level expectations. Children made particularly noteworthy progress in the areas of Literacy, Math, and Scientific Inquiry. All School Readiness Goals were met or nearly met.



CONTINUITY OF CARE & RELATIONSHIPS

At HS & ELP, we know that all learning and development happens in the context of stable, caring, long-term relationships. Whenever possible, we work with families from pregnancy or infancy until their children go off to kindergarten! This spring we were delighted to celebrate several children who graduated after five years or more with HS & ELP. Here are two of their stories.



MATTHIAS

Before Matthias was even born, his mother was enrolled in Head Start at Home (then called Home-Based Early Head Start) for support during her pregnancy. He transitioned into the program when he was just over a month old, and his family continued to work with their Home Visitor until he transitioned to Vernon Street as a toddler.

His teachers this spring described Matthias as a social butterfly in the Butterfly Room! They say he is such a kind and caring friend to his peers and he gets along with everyone. Over his time here, Matthias has come out of his shell and developed the confidence to show the people around him



who he is. He has created strong, trusting bonds with his teachers, and he has also become much more independent. Matthias is a very kind person, who will always hold out his hand to a friend who has fallen, offer kind words to a friend who is sad, or invite a lonely friend to play with him.

Matthias's mother Francys said it was strange to think of not being a part of the Vernon Street community once he graduated! The wonderful staff have supported her through many difficulties. Starting a new chapter for her family is bittersweet, and she's so grateful to the teachers and the support staff at Head Start!

AVERYLL

Averyll first enrolled in Early Head Start when he was just over a year old! By the time he set off for kindergarten, Averyll was thriving in his academics.

His teachers reported that he can spell his name, recognize and write most letters of the alphabet, and read and write simple words. He can count up to one hundred and do simple addition and subtraction problems. Averyll has grown significantly in his abilities to communicate his feelings with his words, regulate himself, and get along with his peers. Seeing his growth makes them especially proud to be his teachers be-



cause Averyll has worked through many challenges to get to this point. He has a great imagination, too – here he is holding onto pretend motorcycle handlebars in the sandbox!

When asked what the program has been like for her since her son's infancy, Averyll's mom Jade was very moved. She said that it's been just amazing. When she was devastated by a personal tragedy, staff stood near her in deeply meaningful and authentic ways. Jade will never forget how the program cared for her AND her son. They stood by her side every step of the way

HEAD START AND EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS OF COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY, INC.

STATEMENT OF REVENUE WITH BUDGET COMPARISON FOR HEAD START FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

Revenue and support	Total HS & ELP Actual	Other HS&ELP Actual	Head Start & Early Head Start Actual	Total HS & ELP Budget
Head Start	\$6,656,186	\$-	\$6,656,186	\$6,666,099
Early Head Start	\$2,547,115	\$-	\$2,547,115	\$3,051,633
USDA Food and Nutrition Service thru DESE	\$270,347	\$270,347	\$-	\$-
Early Education and Care (EEC) Subsidies	\$2,315,291	\$2,315,291	\$-	\$-
EEC Head Start State Supplemental	\$763,622	\$763,622	\$-	\$-
CPPI, Northampton Public Schools	\$59,865	\$59,865	\$-	\$-
Town of West Springfield Office of Community Development	\$9,244	\$9,244	\$-	\$-
Parent fees	\$53,174	\$53,174	\$-	\$-
Shurtleff Children's Services	\$3,044	\$3,044	\$-	\$-
In-kind rents, goods and services	\$884,254	\$-	\$884,254	\$821,317
Other Revenue	\$36,123	\$36,123	\$-	\$-
One-Time HS/EHS	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
One-Time COVID support revenue ARPA	\$819,114	\$819,114	\$-	\$-
Total revenue and support	\$14,417,379	\$4,329,825	\$10,087,555	\$10,539,049

Volunteers by the Numbers

Volunteers are hugely important to our program and bring skills, talents, and care! Plus, their donated time counts toward the “in kind” match for our federal Head Start grant. This year Head Start parents, family members, and community members spent time in classrooms; joined our Policy Council, Education Advisory Committee, and Health and Family Services Advisory Committee; attended family meetings and extended their children’s learning at home; interned in our program; and donated goods and time to help our community. About 223 volunteers, 182 of them parents, contributed over 1,625 hours of their time!



HEAD START AND EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS OF COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY, INC.

STATEMENT OF EXPENSE WITH BUDGET COMPARISON FOR HEAD START FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

Expense	Total HS & ELP Actual	Other HS&ELP Actual	Head Start & Early Head Start Actual	Total HS & ELP Budget
Salaries & wages	\$6,827,880	\$2,352,272	\$4,475,608	\$4,607,231
Payroll taxes	\$719,189	\$250,969	\$468,220	\$499,869
Fringe benefits	\$1,067,481	\$306,312	\$761,169	\$735,275
Facility rent & mortgage interest	\$235,662	\$9,602	\$226,059	\$27,695
Facility operations/maintenance/furnishings	\$586,516	\$117,743	\$468,773	\$387,814
Property & general liability insurance	\$35,533	\$8,100	\$27,432	\$24,500
Direct care consultants	\$130,030	\$8,088	\$121,942	\$31,750
Subcontracted direct care	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Staff training, conferences & meetings	\$76,874	\$1,009	\$75,865	\$53,800
Staff mileage/travel	\$45,991	\$4,278	\$41,713	\$47,050
Meals and food preparation supplies	\$293,028	\$232,324	\$60,704	\$35,079
Client transportation	\$74,305	\$-	\$74,305	\$80,750
Vehicle expenses	\$37,974	\$2,312	\$35,662	\$24,500
Program supplies/materials and equipment	\$177,206	\$45,799	\$131,407	\$106,130
Office, telephone, advertising and other misc expenses	\$157,639	\$37,558	\$120,081	\$55,938
Depreciation of property & equipment	\$8,922	\$894	\$8,028	\$27,746
Capital expenditures	\$61,191	\$16,191	\$45,000	\$-
In-kind expenses	\$884,254	\$-	\$884,254	\$821,317
Allocation of indirect costs	\$1,324,829	\$437,708	\$887,121	\$843,142
Reimbursable expense	\$12,744,503	\$3,831,159	\$8,913,344	\$8,409,586
Accrued vacation expense	\$21,405	\$21,405	\$-	\$-
Non-reimbursable depreciation expense	\$147,615	\$35,952	\$111,664	\$-
Non-reimbursable indirect costs	\$168,167	\$40,422	\$127,745	\$-
Prior year costs	\$2,784	\$1,220	\$1,563	\$-
Uncollected parent fees	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-
Non-reimbursable expense	\$339,972	\$98,999	\$240,973	\$-
Total expense	\$13,084,475	\$3,930,158	\$9,154,316	\$8,409,586
Net Revenue Over Expenditures	\$1,332,904	\$399,666	\$933,238	\$2,129,463

Head Start Funding Notes

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Head Start State Supplemental grant revenue is used to meet a portion of the 20% non-federal match requirement.

Administration for Children and Families Reviews

HS & ELP's most recent monitoring event was a Focus Area 2 review conducted in March 2022 by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). HS & ELP was in compliance on all measures and no corrective action was required.

Community Action's most recent independent audit submitted a consolidated financial statement for the period ending September 30, 2024 and had no material findings.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Development programs serve residents of Franklin and Hampshire counties.

Re-Entry workforce Development programs serve people leaving incarceration. We provide case management, job readiness, credentials in culinary or manufacturing industries, and On-The-Job training to help people transition to the community.

Luis Mercer-Torres, a graduate of the Foundational Manufacturing program through Community Action's Workforce Development initiative delivered is thriving in his role at the Western MA Food Processing Center. Immediately after graduation, Luis hired by Liz Buxton, Director of Operations, who remains a dedicated partner in supporting our Commonwealth Corporation's Reentry Workforce Development Grant.



Nafeeza Castro, Luis Mercer-Torres, Jason Noyes, Liz Buxton, Shannon Martineau

I have so much to thank Community Action for, without this program I don't know what would have happened to me. This place is where it's at if you need help. I'm so grateful for the opportunity and chance at my life. I have my own apartment and am looking forward to the rest of my life.

— Luis Mercer-Torres

YOUNG PARENTS PROGRAM

This two-generation program supported 58 parents and 72 children of young families. Our families achieved 65 outcomes within the 5 pillars (education, career, life and personal, parenting/family) including:

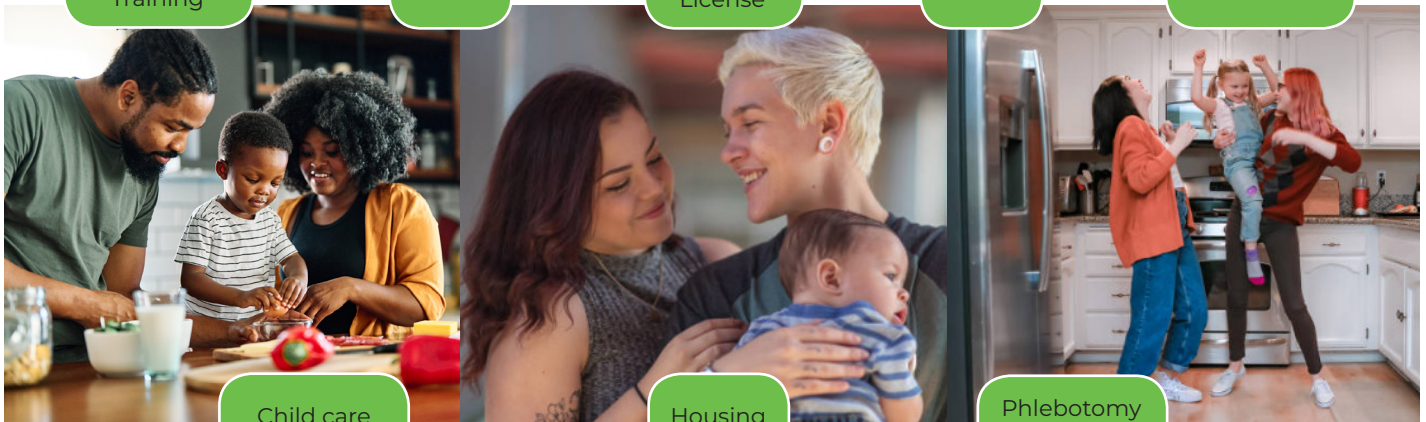
Cosmetology Training

GED

Driver's License

College

Employment



Child care

Housing

Phlebotomy training

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement team had a robust year that brought lots of changes to our community collaborations. In 2024, we scaled up our social media presence, secured partnerships with local businesses to help support some of our programs, and hosted the first in-person Annual Meeting since the start of the pandemic.

We also published three stories in local publications that highlighted CAPV's work: one about a young parent finding her way to stability, one about the value of insulating and weatherizing your home, and one about the community and friendships built in our Healthy Bones and Balance senior exercise classes.

We also had a record-breaking Heat Up Campaign, raising over \$150,000 for a fund that helps people stay safe and warm in their homes during the coldest months of the year.



COMMUNITY ACTION ANNUAL MEETING

Keeping our community fed, warm, supported & connected.

**Celebration Breakfast & Annual Meeting
at Greenfield Community College
April 11, 2024 | 8:00-9:30am
ALL WELCOME!**

We can do all these things because our community cares for one another. On behalf of our staff, our participants, and our neighbors:

THANK YOU!



You give a young mom a ride to GED class...and her future.



You keep a local senior safe, warm, and in her home all winter.



You put food on the table. And in the fridge. And in hungry bellies.



www.communityaction.us/giving

THREE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE

The Three County Continuum of Care (3CoC) MA-507 fosters a community-wide vision, strategy, and commitment to preventing and ending homelessness across Franklin, Hampshire, and Berkshire counties. Through a Housing First approach, the CoC mobilizes funding, strengthens coordination among mainstream resources and housing programs, and establishes system-wide data collection and performance measurement to advance equitable housing solutions for vulnerable populations.

As part of these efforts, the CoC works in partnership with its member agencies, individuals with lived experience, and community stakeholders to assess needs, implement strategies, and drive policy changes that promote housing stability. A key component of this work is the annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count, a collaborative effort involving service providers, volunteers, and outreach teams to identify and count individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This process


includes both a sheltered and unsheltered count, ensuring that we gather critical data to inform resource allocation, program planning, and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing homelessness in our region. By working collectively, the CoC strives to create a more inclusive, effective, and data-driven system that centers the voices of those most impacted by housing instability and homelessness.

PIT Count

of people counted experiencing chronic homelessness
2023: 150 • 2024: 155

of families experiencing homelessness
2023: 195 • 2024: 507

of people experiencing homelessness
2023: 622 • 2024: 961



of people exited homelessness to permanent housing in
2023: 309
2024: 389

Shelter, transitional housing, and outreach providers such as Louison House, Soldier On, CSO, Eliot Human Services, Construct, ServiceNet, Gandara Center, CHD, and Craigs Door have done a phenomenal job on providing access to and assistance with housing opportunities.



The People with Lived Experience (PLE) Action Board organized a survival kit collection for our unhoused neighbors, distributing items at community breakfasts in Amherst, Northampton and Greenfield, and through outreach near shelters and parks in Greenfield. Items were donated from various community members, and local organizations such as: Greenfield Savings Bank, CHD, the Opioid Task Force, Greenfield Public Library, the Mary Lyons Foundation, Craig's Doors, the Northampton Recovery Center, and C3 ACO.



The CoC launched its TalentLMS Training Platform, designed to provide uniform training for all service providers, advocates, and people with lived experience. This platform offers a range of essential courses, including CoC 101, Coordinated Entry Assessment Training, and Landlord Engagement, as well as specialized trainings like Domestic Violence 101 housing rights, workers' rights, and the Nothing About Us Without Us Community Empowerment and Service provider training, ensuring that all partners have access to critical knowledge and best practices to enhance service delivery and promote equitable housing solutions.



FUNDERS

We gratefully acknowledge the support and partnership of the following organizations that contributed financially to our work in FY2024

Each funding source is listed under the organization from which the funding originates, with any intermediaries following.

FEDERAL

Corporation for National and Community Service, Senior Corps, RSVP

U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Program
- Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, University of Massachusetts Medical School Establishment Grant for the Affordable Care Act and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

U.S. Department of Energy

- Weatherization Assistance Program, via Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start
- Childcare and Development Block Grant, via the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
- Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP), via Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), via Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
- Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant via Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration STOP Act Grant, via Franklin Regional Council of Governments Partnership for Youth

FUNDERS CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE

FUNDERS CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Community Development Block Grants, via Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and
 - Town of Buckland
 - City of Greenfield
 - City of Northampton
 - Town of Shelburne
 - City of West Springfield
- Continuum of Care Program
- Older Adult Home Modification Program
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program



U.S. Department of Labor

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Activities, via Franklin Hampshire Regional Employment Board

U.S. Internal Revenue Service VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program, via The Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Town of Conway, Guilford Trust

City of Northampton, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Community Recovery Projects

Massachusetts Children's Trust

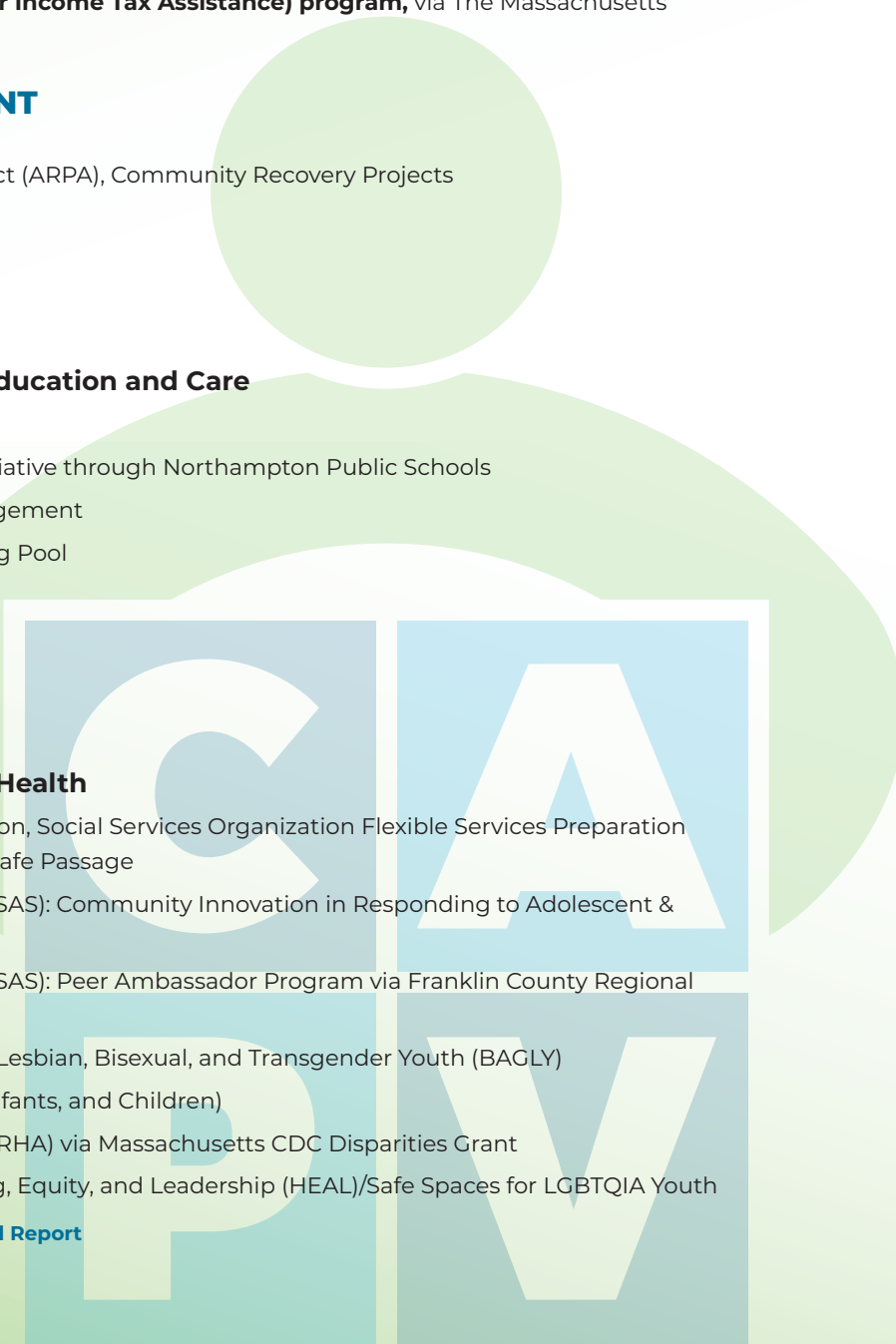
- Healthy Families
- Massachusetts Family Center

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

- Commonwealth Cares for Children
- Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative through Northampton Public Schools
- Coordinated Family and Community Engagement
- Disabilities/Special Needs Flexible Spending Pool
- Head Start State Supplemental
- Income-Eligible Child Care
- Parent-Child+
- Supportive Child Care

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

- Bureau of Community Health and Prevention, Social Services Organization Flexible Services Preparation Fund and Healthy Relationships grant via Safe Passage
- Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS): Community Innovation in Responding to Adolescent & Young Adult Substance Use
- Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS): Peer Ambassador Program via Franklin County Regional Council of Governments
- HIV/AIDS Bureau -- Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (BAGLY)
- Maternal and Child Health WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
- New England Rural Health Association (NERHA) via Massachusetts CDC Disparities Grant
- Youth Violence Prevention through Healing, Equity, and Leadership (HEAL)/Safe Spaces for LGBTQIA Youth



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance – Young Parents Program

Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, Skill-Up, in collaboration with Commonwealth Corporation

Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services

- Homeless Youth Services
- Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, Massachusetts Family Resource Center
- MassHealth via Community Care Cooperative (C3) Accountable Care Organization
- MassHealth via Partners Healthcare

Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

- Community Services Block Grant
- Shelter Diversion Funds via Service Net

Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

- Commonwealth Corporation, Re-entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program

Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General

- Heating fuel assistance through the The Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)

PRIVATE

- All Souls Church Unitarian Universalist, Greenfield
- Berkshire Gas, via Center for Eco Technology
- Beveridge Family Foundation
- Charles Hall Foundation, via Bank of America Philanthropic Solutions
- Coca-Cola Foundation
- Columbia Gas of America, via Greater Lawrence Community Action Council
- Comcast NBC Universal Foundation
- Community Software Group
- Cooley Dickinson Healthcare
- Eversource, via Action for Boston Community Development
- Franklin County People's Fund
- Franklin County Regional Council of Governments
- Greenfield Northampton Cooperative Bank
- Greenfield Savings Bank
- Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation's Starlight Program
- Health New England: DEIB Mini-grant
- Hyams Foundation
- Jane Sanders Fund for Women, Children and Families
- John Timothy and Kelsey Crowley Fund
- The M&T Charitable Foundation
- National Grid, via Action, Inc.
- Perpetual Trust, via Bank of America Philanthropic Solutions
- Shurtleff Children's Services
- SPIFFY Coalition, Collaborative for Educational Services
- TD Charitable Foundation
- United Way of the Franklin and Hampshire Region
- Walter Phillips Fund/Vanguard Charitable Fund
- Western Massachusetts Alliance for Digital Equity via Baystate Health
- Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness, via United Way of the Franklin and Hampshire Region



FINANCIALS

COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY AND SUBSIDIARIES CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

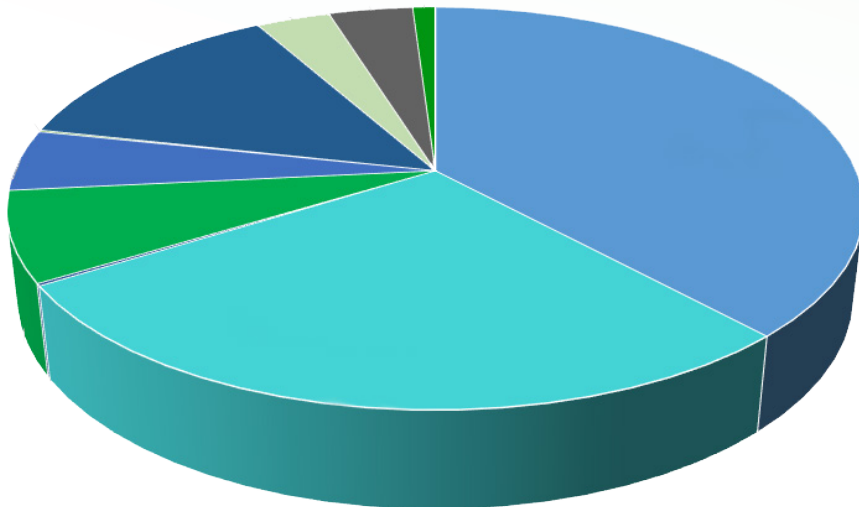
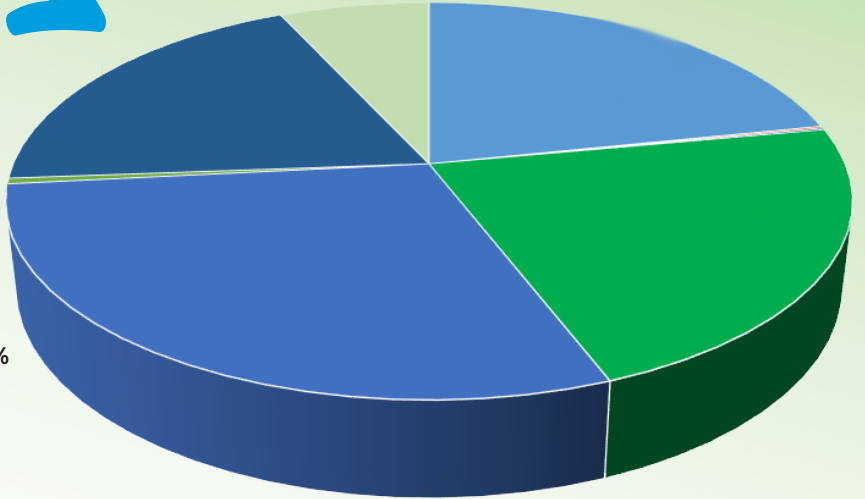
FOR THE YEAR YEAR ENDING SEPT. 30, 2024
WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS FOR 2023

Expense	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	total 2024	total 2023
Revenue and support:				
Federal contracts	\$23,398,444	\$-	\$23,398,444	\$25,836,446
State contracts	\$10,532,640	-	\$10,532,640	\$7,551,843
Other contracts and grants	\$9,750,335	-	\$9,750,335	\$6,500,246
In-kind	\$3,004,696	-	\$3,004,696	\$3,023,751
Donations	\$148,598	\$117,815	\$266,413	\$339,174
United Way	\$73,269	-	\$73,269	\$86,810
Parent and other program service fees	\$492,014	-	\$492,014	\$352,254
Employment assistance services	-	-	-	\$100,590
Investment income (loss)	\$9,452	-	\$9,452	\$5,059
Other revenue	\$103,143	-	\$103,143	\$118,804
Net assets released from restrictions	\$205,735	(\$205,735)	-	-
Total revenue and support	\$47,718,326	(\$87,920)	\$47,630,406	\$43,914,977
Expenses:				
Program	\$43,098,663	-	\$43,098,663	\$40,499,754
Administrative	\$3,345,291	-	\$3,345,291	\$3,108,807
Fundraising	\$85,204	-	\$85,204	\$19,793
Total expenses	\$46,529,158	-	\$46,529,158	\$43,628,354
Change in net assets	\$1,189,168	(\$87,920)	\$1,101,248	\$286,623
Other Change In Net Assets				
Gain on Sale of Property and Equipment	-	-	-	\$150,000
Net assets - beginning of year	\$3,449,826	\$235,876	\$3,685,702	\$3,249,079
Net assets - end of year	\$4,638,994	\$147,956	\$4,786,950	\$3,685,702



Sources of Funds

- Other **21.7%**
- United Way **0.2%**
- Federal Funding - Through Organizations **0.1%**
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts **22.1%**
- Federal Funding - Through State **29.2%**
- Federal Funding - Through Local Governments **0.5%**
- Federal Funding - Direct **19.3%**
- Contributions & In-Kind Donations **6.9%**



Uses of Funds

- Pass-Through Funds **38.12%**
- Head Start & Early Learning Programs **27.92%**
- Fundraising **0.18%**
- Administration **7.19%**
- Energy **4.93%**
- Harmon/FCAC **0.14%**
- Community Services & Asset Development **13.35%**
- Youth **3.34%**
- Family Support **3.80%**
- WIC **1.02%**





COMMUNITY ACTION PIONEER VALLEY

An eighteen-member Board of Directors governs the organization.

The community we serve elects six of these individuals. They represent the lower-income communities of Franklin and Hampshire Counties. Our other Board members represent public officials and local private businesses and organizations.

The elected members of our Board fulfill an important CAPV value: people who have experienced poverty should get to decide how to address it. We can only end poverty if our whole community works to do so. Our Board of Directors works to represent the whole community.

Board of Directors

Charity Day (President)	LifePath
Lizbeth Del Toro-Mejias (Vice President)	Baystate Health
Chelsea Depault (Treasurer)	Greenfield Co-operative Bank
Ellen Cain (Clerk)	Dept. of Children and Families (Retired)
Alena Bartoli	HS&ELP Policy Council Chair
Barbara Black	Northampton Public Schools (Retired)
Ellen Cain	Dept. of Children and Families (Retired)
Chelsea Depault	Greenfield Co-operative Bank
John Hird	UMass Amherst
Anita McConnell	ServiceNet (Retired)
Rachel McMahon	Office of Rep. Susannah Whipps
Lewis Metaxas	Community Representative
Jennifer Moyston	Community Representative
Maria Moreno	Holyoke Community College
Natalie Spatcher	Community Representative
Aster Sutton	Community Representative
Nellie Taylor	UMass Amherst



For more information and to stay up to date on Community Action Pioneer Valley, visit our website or scan the QR code www.communityaction.us





**Some of our neighbors
are cold.**

**That's not ok with us.
We have a plan to heat
their homes.**

We need your help to do it.

**Some of our neighbors
are hungry.**

**That's not ok with us.
We have ways to fill their
tables and bellies.**

We need your help to do it.

**Some of our neighbors
might lose their housing.**

**That's not ok with us.
We have ways to help them
keep their homes.**

We need your help to do it.

**Some of our neighbors feel
isolated and scared.**

**That's not ok with us.
We have ways to support
them in community.**

We need your help to do it.

**Some of our neighbors are
parents without support.**

**That's not ok with us.
We have ways to lift them
up and help them out.**

We need your help to do it.

