

COMMUNITY ACTION

Ulster and Sullivan

Over a Half a Century of Empowering People

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For over a half a century, and still today, Community Action has strived to empower, educate, and ease some of the burden **people** face daily. Here are just a few of the thousands to whom we have given a hand-up:

- A 62 year old **veteran** returning home from a hospital stay with Stage 4 Kidney Disease to a home with a leaky roof and mold.
- A **senior couple** who lived without hot water for a year and a half
- A victim of domestic violence needing housing assistance
- A working **family** in need of fuel assistance
- One of hundreds of **people** finding themselves homeless and living in an emergency housing location
- One of the several minority owned businesses participating in our incubator kitchen program

The number of **people** who have reached out to us requesting help with their rent, mortgage, or utility bills grows every year. Similar to the **families** that reach out looking to ensure their **children** get a *head start* with their education. They may receive help through our free farm stands, food distributions, walk-in pantry or mobile pantry. Some have **children** in our Head Start/Early Head Start program and some have worked with our Weatherization Program to make their homes energy efficient and healthier.

What has become increasingly clear is that the lines between **people** living in poverty and working class **families** continues to blur. The need for help continues to grow. The mission of Community Action is as relevant as ever: Community Action empowers lives through community program and partnerships that promote individual and community enrichment. We promote self-sufficiency and strive to end poverty.

What drive Community Action? **People!** Individuals, families, children, seniors, board members, staff, and participants. People with a spirit of courage that don't and won't give up.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Douglas Blancero".

Douglas Blancero
Executive Director

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

Albert Schweitzer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Don Hackett, Vice President

Lynn Formica, Treasurer

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Ethel Knox

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Tina Liebertz

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Kathy Orchen

Stacie Barth

Jennifer Scanelli

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Douglas Blancero, Executive Director

Pamela Wilson, Deputy & HR Director

Tina Lutes, Financial Director

Suzanne Hinchey, Outreach Program Director

Pamela Wenner, Early Head Start/Head Start Director

Carole Furman, Weatherization& EmPower Services Program Director

OVERVIEW

Community Action was incorporated in 1965 and received an initial planning and development grant in the spring of 1966. For the first time, but not the last, agencies and community leaders were involved in the planning as were community residents who were to receive the services.

The original mandate which still holds true to this day is to provide resources and services which promote people's dignity and self-sufficiency. Our Vision, like the hundreds of Community Actions across the country, is to end poverty.

Through the last 55 years, UCCAC continues to implement the philosophy of self-help; a "a hand up, not a handout" through practical, timely, and innovative programs, and services that meet people at their point of need and emphasize and develop problem solving skills for people.

Services

Head Start/Early Head Start provides opportunities for social, emotional, physical and cognitive development for children from birth to five years old. Services include comprehensive health, nutrition, dental health, education, mental health, parent education and engagement, family goal setting and referrals, as well as supporting families in obtaining services for children with special needs. Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Outreach Community Services addresses the needs of the low-income community by providing a wide range of services such as emergency food, temporary shelter, supporting individuals and families in emergency locations, rental assistance, fuel and utility assistance and employment assistance. The program is funded by NYS Department of State.

Weatherization is a residential energy efficiency program funded by NYS of Housing & Community Renewal that reduces energy use. Homeowners and renters may be eligible to receive free services on their home to make it safer, more comfortable, and energy efficient.

EmPower is an energy efficiency program for tenants and homeowners, funded by the New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA). Designed to help low-income households reduce energy use and costs using cost effective Electric Reduction (ER) measures such as lighting, refrigerator and freezer replacements, and Home Performance (HP) strategies.



HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START



The common thread running through and connecting all of Community Action's programs and services is the drive to promote individual and community enrichment—to empower people. This is evident in our Head Start/Early Head Start Program. We believe-we know- that education is a pathway out of poverty and ensuring that the journey along that pathway begins with the strong support of family and teachers. That is what our Head Start Program provides.

The Role of Staff and Family—an unbeatable team

Agencies Efforts to prepare children for kindergarten and beyond!

The program continues the following strategies for High Quality Teaching and Learning to Achieve Established School Readiness Goals and Prepare Head Start children birth-five, for Kindergarten.

- The program conducts early screening for the identification of potential developmental delays or health conditions to focus on prevention, early detection, and follow-up treatment.
- Research-based High Scope curricula and assessment and the Pyramid Model for promoting social and emotional competence in infants and young children.
- Positive Solutions for Families is an evidence-based, family-friendly parenting workshop whereby families learn complementary strategies for supporting their child's social and emotional well-being at home, thus providing a comprehensive approach to support children's Social and Emotional development.
- Using the Child Observation Record, children are assessed 3 times per year. During the 2022-2023 school year, children continued to grow between each round as they progress toward school readiness.
- The program invested in rain and snow gear for children to expand their learning opportunities in their natural environment through outdoor education and classrooms.

Opportunities for parents and family members to be engaged in their child's education ...

- Starting with parent participation in the Ages and Stages Developmental Screening ASQ and Social and Emotional, families have an active role in their child's educational experiences.
- In partnership, families and staff are focused on prevention, early detection, and follow up treatment.

Parents are engaged in their child's education at home visits, by supporting goals in Individualized Plans at home using HighScope Activities for Parents.

- Home Visits and Parent Teacher Conferences provide a Family Report in English or Spanish. Teachers choose supporting anecdotes to highlight as a personalized statement about the child's development in relation to school readiness goals.
- Parents' partner with program staff when we plan for transitions of children within our program or to partners within the community.
- Head Start parents receive screening results, assessment data as well as School Readiness reports. This information is key to their partnering with program staff to plan for children.
- Family Services staff support families with their individual goals by providing them with community resources that will support them in achieving their goals.

External Monitoring & Reviews

Community Action embraces the concept of monitoring in general, both external and internal. It is a valuable tool that ensures:

- our children and families receive the highest quality of services
- potential problems are identified and addressed before they become critical
- we have the opportunity to adjust strategies, processes and/or policies to make sure we stay on track and achieve our objectives



The vast majority of reviews have been triggered by self-reports- a testimony to the staff's commitment to excellence. During 2022-2023, the Agency was engaged in three corrective action plans from the prior year, resulting in successfully correcting each identified item.

Our Annual Audit will be uploaded to our website upon completion.

The number one way that we can address these long-term challenges of poverty, of education, is to invest in early childhood education.

Julián Castro

Former United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

The Numbers

UCCAC Head Start Data 2022-2023	Head Start
Total Children Served	86
Total Families Served	78
Percentage of eligible children served	10%
Average % of monthly enrollment	28.48%
% Of enrolled children that received medical exams	100%
% Of enrolled children that received professional dental exams	81.4%
# Of families experiencing homelessness during the year	6
# Of families that acquired housing	3
# of children with a disability & receiving services	29

Due to the lack of staffing, we were unable to open our Early Head Start Program

Estimated Community Need for Head Start:	
Head Start eligible children (Ages 3 & 4) in Ulster County	857
% of the eligible children served through 86 enrolled Head Start slots	10%
% additional children served through other child development programs	56.24%
% un-served	33.72%

Estimated Community Need for Early Head Start:	
Early Head Start eligible children (Ages 3 & 4) in Ulster County	1286
Due to a staffing shortage Early Head Start was closed during this time.	0
% additional children served through other child development programs	6.61%
% un-served	93.39%

Head Start/Early Head Start Proposed Budget 2023-2024

Line Item	Federal	Non-Federal Share	Total
Personnel	\$2,473,056		\$2,473,056
Fringe	\$428,536		\$428,536
Travel	\$2,046		\$2,046
Equipment	0		
Supplies	\$87,870	\$32,606	\$120,476
Contractual	\$188,409	\$246,068	\$434,477
Other	\$395,602	\$625,237	\$1,020,839
Training	\$40,125		\$40,125
Total	3,615,644	903,911	4,519,555

2022-2023 Public & Private Funds**Public Funds- Department of Health & Human Services**

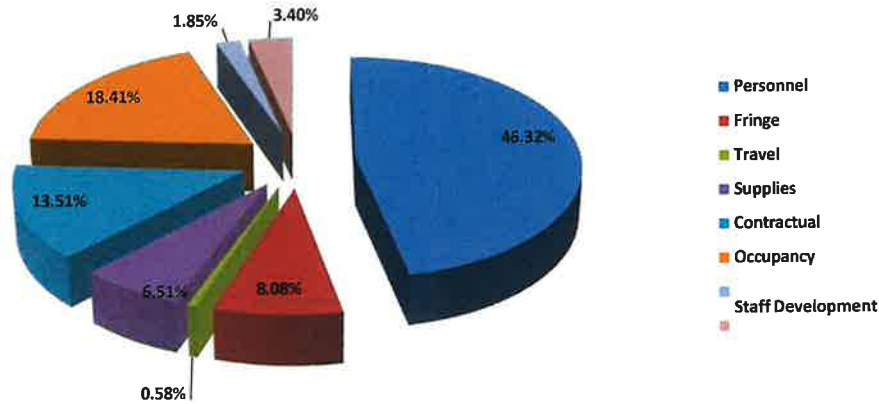
Head Start & Early Head Start Program Services	\$3,573,473
Head Start & Early Head Start T & TA	\$42,171
CACFP- New York State Department of Health	\$51,223

Private Funds

Total Public & Private Funds	\$3,666,867

Actual Year End expenses

Head Start Early Head Start Expenditures 2021-2022



Early Head Start Expenditures 2022-2023

Personnel	1,401,587.40	46.32%
Fringe	244,562.86	8.08%
Travel	17,582.91	0.58%
Supplies	196,944.55	6.51%
Contractual	408,925.77	13.51%
Occupancy	557,129.15	18.41%
Staff Development	55,925.41	1.85%
Other	102,906.59	3.40%
Equipment	40,238.99	1.33%
	3,025,803.63	

Staff

Pam Wenner, Program Director

Rebecca Pisciotta, Assistant Program Director

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

For over 55 years the Community Outreach Program has personified the mission of UCCAC, Inc. Our Outreach staff advocates for low-income persons, providing a wide range of services and resources through “neighborhood centers” focusing on assisting families achieve a degree of self-sufficiency.

The Outreach Program offers residents of Ulster County and Sullivan County community resources and support to help them deal with short term emergencies, and also ensure they get back on their feet over the long term. They partner with local and state government agencies, social services, civic organizations, and charities. They have a diverse offering of programs for low- and moderate-income people, as well as disadvantaged individuals and their families.

Our volunteers are essential to UCCAC services. Their time and talents grow, strengthen, and nurture our Agency. The Agency depends on volunteers to implement all of our projects. Their services are greatly appreciated.

Our Year in Review

- A total of **13,410 hours** were donated this year through our volunteers. Our volunteers play a very significant role in the success of Agency programs and services.
- The Outreach Program partners with local and state government agencies, social services, civic organizations, and charities. They design and administer programs that provide comprehensive and coordinated services to provide short- and long-term assistance.
- **149** Individuals in **56** households received Housing Assistance to prevent eviction, foreclosure or obtain safe & affordable housing with the first month's rent.
- **3186** Individuals in **1480** households received food bags to help with food insecurity. **79,920 meals were distributed.**
- **120** children received school supplies to prepare for school readiness.
- **289** households displaced families placed in motels in Ulster & Green County received food bags and personal hygiene items twice a month from a grant through Ulster County DSS.
- **93%** of households had income at or below 200% of poverty level.



- **151** Individuals in **49** households received Utility Assistance to prevent termination of services.
- **568** Individual in **241** households received HEAP assistance (Home Energy Assistance Program).
- **586,199** Pounds of food were distributed to low-income families.
- A new Outreach office was opened in Ellenville for Ulster County residents.
- **4,219** households were assisted with the Regional Food Bank Mass Distribution; and Regional Food Bank Farm Stand.
- Over **700** families received household items through our 'Walmart Giveaway.'
- AARP Tax-Aide Program completed **209** tax returns with an average refund was **\$1631:** totaling **\$330,879** in returns

**NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS SERVED:
7,539 FAMILIES - ASSISTING 9,574 INDIVIDUALS**



Outreach Staff:

Suzy Hinchey, CSBG Program Director

Bryan Warren, Liberty Outreach Manager

Jan Cross, Ellenville Outreach Manager

Wayne Brodhurst, Transportation Manager

WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM

Overview

Community Action's Weatherization Assistance Program is comprised of two complementary components: Weatherization and EmPower. Working in conjunction they help lower energy costs for income-eligible households while conserving energy and improving safety and health standards.

2023 saw an increase in our Weatherization Program funding. In addition to monies received from NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal/Weatherization Assistance Program, we were awarded additional grants from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL) and WRF (Weatherization Readiness Fund). These new streams of support allowed us to expand our spectrum of services to include assistance to homes we once could not.

In addition to the above funding streams, we were able to utilize NYSEDA's Empower Program to improve each home by providing additional insulation.

A total of 77 homes received energy audits in 2023 with 68 homes receiving weatherization services. Toward the end of this program year, we received an additional \$100,000 that allows us to address issues like mold remediation, lead remediation, roof repairs and chimney removal in 2024. All of these issues at one time presented obstacles preventing people from receiving weatherization services.

In addition, we were awarded a grant of \$700,000 to install solar panels in low-income units in Kingston, New York.

Community Action is proud to be part of the NYS Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), the largest residential energy conservation program in the country. WAP assists income-eligible homeowners and renters in Ulster County by reducing heating and cooling costs through energy conservation measures, while also addressing health and safety issues in the home.

Program services are available to both homeowners and renters, with priority given to senior citizens, families with children, and persons with disabilities. Applications are accepted from renters, homeowners, and rental property owners. Both privately owned single-family and multi-family buildings are assisted including homeowners, affordable housing developers, property managers, and other housing and community development agencies.

Energy conservation measures are identified via an onsite energy audit of each home. These measures are then weighted by the amount of energy savings they yield, and the measures that return the highest energy savings are installed utilizing industry-proven methods and best practices. In 2023 Community Action provided energy conservation services to xx homes throughout Ulster County.

Benefits of Weatherization

- Helps reduce energy costs
- Conserves energy
- Increases comfort in the home
- Improves safety and health standards
- Preserves housing
- Provides jobs

Services

- Helps reduce energy costs
- Conserves energy
- Increases comfort in the home
- Improves safety and health standards
- Preserves housing
- Provides jobs



Weatherization Crew after a long, hot hard working day 8-4-23

Staff

Carole Furman, Program Director

Michael Dougherty, Assistant Program Director

Lori Ozores, Office Manager

Joyce Wagner, Administrative Assistant

Harry Block, Auditor

Luke Southworth, Crew Leader

Jacob Winne, Crew

Nick Winne, Crew

Parker Saunder-Ferris, Crew

Imari Ames, Crew

THANK YOU!



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