Strengthening and Connecting Community Action Agencies Across Massachusetts and Collectively Advocating For an End to Poverty
The programs Community Action Agencies (CAAs) run work. Programs such as fuel assistance, weatherization and Head Start keep more than 900,000 people out of poverty in the state of Massachusetts each year. The other part of the story is that even though most of the people living with low incomes we serve work – one if not two jobs – they still struggle to get by because wages for low and middle-income workers have not kept up with productivity for almost 4 decades.

These and other findings of the report “Obstacles on the Road to Opportunity: Finding a Way Forward”, commissioned by MASSCAP and written by MassBudget, are both sobering and encouraging and come at a crucial time – when the programs run by CAAs and other community-based organizations are threatened with virtual elimination in the Trump administration’s FY 19 federal budget proposal.

CAAs, since 1964 when they were created by Congress and President Johnson and mandated to “eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty”, have been working every day with people living with low incomes to create opportunity, change lives, make the economy work for everyone, and . . . end poverty.

The single mother, the working couple with children, the elderly homeowner, the disabled veteran – our vulnerable friends and neighbors – want what we all want: an equal opportunity to work, to support our families, to live and be engaged in safe and supportive communities, and to plan for a hopeful future.

One way MASSCAP strengthens the ability of its 23 member CAAs to help our friends and neighbors is through training. MASSCAP members established in its FY 2015-FY 2017 Strategic Plan a primary goal of developing a robust, holistic, responsive, and sustainable training initiative – The MASSCAP Training Center (MTC). In its first two years, the MTC has developed and implemented a comprehensive approach to training involving over 40 statewide, regional, and local management and program training offerings per year – face to face and remote – for all levels of staff who are also supported by several communities of practices.

Recognizing the importance of our partnership with local, state, and national elected and appointed officials, MASSCAP represents the people we serve and our members at the State House and in Washington DC, advocating for public policies, programs, and practices.

MASSCAP strengthens our network by raising awareness about the importance of addressing poverty and the work of our members through our website, regional, state, and local special events, research and reports, and outreach around critical services such as fuel assistance and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance.

Community Action Agencies have a rich 50+ year history and successful track record of caring and commitment. We are trusted local institutions, reliable, flexible, and steadfast, and we stand ready to help those in need.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely

Joesph P. Diamond
Executive Director

Clare Higgins
MASSCAP President and Executive Director, Community Action of the Pioneer Valley
The Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) is the statewide association of the 23 Community Action Agencies operating in Massachusetts. Through the combined skills and vision of its members, MASSCAP works to enhance the ability of each agency to better serve its clients. We work with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development as well as other state agencies and other statewide allied organizations to open doors to economic stability and prosperity for Massachusetts residents living with low incomes.

The Promise of Community Action
Community Action changes people’s lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Our Mission
To strengthen and connect the statewide network of Community Action Agencies and collectively advocate for an end to poverty.

Our Vision
All Massachusetts residents will be able to meet their basic needs, access economic opportunities, build strong communities and move toward prosperity.

The Community Action Network is strong and effective, known for its valuable work and excellent service delivery, and considered a leading voice and advocate on the subject of poverty and inequality.

MASSCAP provides effective training, advocacy and support to all Community Action Agencies.

MASSCAP Team

Joe Diamond
Executive Director

Jessica Benedetto
Training and Resource Manager

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Communications and Member Services Manager

Martha Rogers
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Consultant, Leadership & Training

Patricia Pelletier
Consultant, Planning & Workforce Development

What is MASSCAP

That almost 2/3 of families in poverty include a working adult.
Poverty in MA

Poverty rate according to Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Poverty Rate in MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Child Poverty Rate in MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than</td>
<td>Children Live With Income Under the Official Poverty Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 7</td>
<td>Children - as High as 45% in Holyoke and 44% in Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Many Communities it is Much Higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 3</td>
<td>Children - 68% in Holyoke and 72% in Springfield, 69% in Lawrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>Near Poor in MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Children Near Poor in MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>of Children Near Poor in Many Communities - 68% in Holyoke and 72% in Springfield, 69% in Lawrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 10</td>
<td>households are “food insecure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>or almost 1 in 4 of households who rent pay half to their income or more on rent each month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wages have not kept up with productivity. In particular, wages for low wage workers.

We know that our programs and policies make a difference. Programs like Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Housing Assistance, tax credits, school meals, WIC are all critical to people’s economic stability.

The Supplemental Poverty Measure takes into account these public benefit programs that help people makes ends meet. Through this measure, we see that these resources moved approximately 920,000 people, including almost 200,000 children, out of poverty.

For more information, read our report *Obstacles on the Road to Opportunity: Finding a Way Forward* written by the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. The report is available on MASSCAP website at www.masscap.org.
Policy Agenda

Through a broad-based education and advocacy effort, we worked with allied organizations and legislators to affect change through four broad public policy goals:

- **Strengthening Families through Affordable and Accessible Early Education & Care**
  
  Early Education and Care programs prepare children for success in school and in life. We supported and advocated for budget initiatives that will improve access to quality affordable early education and care for thousands of families across the state through the retention of good teachers, enhanced referral, improved facilities, and support for Head Start.

  - **Increase** the workforce salary line item for early educators.
  - **Increase** Head Start funding to increase access to Head Start.
  - **Increase** funding for Child Care Resource Referral Access Management.

- **Bridging the Wage Gap**
  
  We supported the work of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites run by CAAs and others and continue to fight for more support for these sites. At VITA sites, volunteers not only provide free tax prep and access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) – considered one of the most effective anti-poverty programs – and other tax credits to low-income tax payers allowing them to pay bills, cover essential needs and save. Low-income tax payers who come to VITA sites are also linked to other critical services that strengthen families and the local economy. While there are 30,000 served at 80 VITA sites in MA, there are still an estimated 75,000 left unserved.

  - **Expand** State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to 30% of Federal.
  - **Increase** Resources for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program Sites.
Creating a Foundation for Economic Opportunity

CAAs have many programs that provide essential support to help households living with low incomes meet fundamental needs and enjoy an important measure of stability – the kind of stability that is a firm platform for economic opportunity and mobility. One extremely important program is LIHEAP or fuel assistance. In light of a reduced federal allocation and higher home heating prices, we advocated for state fuel assistance resources. We work closely with state fuel assistance officials at the Department of Housing and Community Development, state legislators, and the Governor to assess the need for a supplemental state fuel assistance allocation.

We supported an increase in funding for the Unaccompanied Youth Housing and Wraparound Services line item, a program that helps youth and young adults on a path out of homelessness or the risk of it. Early intervention and prevention can change lives.

Strengthening Critical Human Services Infrastructure

Effective, trusted, local and longstanding community-based organizations such as Community Action Agencies make up a system of comprehensive services that support economic mobility for hundreds of thousands of low-income individuals and families in the Commonwealth. Together, these networks comprise a human services infrastructure of caring that is as essential to the well-being of the state’s residents as health care institutions, public safety including police and fire, and public transportation.

We advocated for legislation and a line item to update the state Community Action statute to reflect the depth and breadth of our central role in fighting poverty in virtually every city and town in the state.

Federal and state human service and benefit programs help keep more than 920,000 people per year in Massachusetts from poverty.

The poverty rate for Massachusetts is 10% overall, and for children, it is 14%, just under the levels in 1960. We must address the wage gap to change these statistics.

Policy Agenda
The 23 CAAs served close to 600,000 people with more than 75 programs in virtually every city and town across the state.

In 2017, all CAAs conducted comprehensive Community Needs Assessments to identify the urgent needs of low-income individuals in their communities and developed strategic plans that define strategies and services to meet those needs and strengthen their communities.

The top needs identified across the state are:

- Housing
- Workforce Development
- Financial Capability
- Early Education and Care
- Basic Needs: Food, Heat and Health

CAAs, together with MASSCAP, are working to create programs and partnerships as well as advocate for policies to meet these needs.
Serving the Entire State

**2017 Statewide Impact**

Approximately 600,000 served annually

+32,000 obtained child care including before / after school care

+8,500 served by Head Start

2,438 obtained employment

+$32 M in tax credits

+160,000 received fuel assistance

+17,000 accessed free tax prep bringing back

6,431 households weatherized

825,602 volunteer hours donated, +72% from those we served

14,699 mobilized & participating in Anti-Poverty initiatives

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**ABCD | Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.**
178 Tremont Street | Boston | 02111

**ACTION | Action Inc.**
180 Main Street | Gloucester | 01930

**BCAC | Berkshire Community Action Council, Inc.**
1531 East Street | Pittsfield | 02101

**CAAS | Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.**
66-70 Union Square | Somerville | 02143

**CACC | Community Action Committee of Cape Cod & Islands, Inc.**
372 North Street | Hyannis | 02601

**CAI | Community Action Inc.**
145 Essex Street | Haverhill | 01832

**CAPIC | Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc.**
100 Everett Ave., #14 | Chelsea | 02150

**CAPV | Community Action Pioneer Valley**
393 Main St., 4th Fl. | Greenfield | 01301

**CEOC | Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee, Inc.**
11 Inman Street | Cambridge | 02139

**CFC | Citizens for Citizens, Inc.**
264 Griffin Street | Fall River | 02724

**CTI | Community Teamwork, Inc.**
55 Merrimack Street | Lowell | 01852

**GLCAC | Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc.**
305 Essex Street, 4th floor | Lawrence | 01840

**LEO | Lynn Economic Opportunity, Inc.**
156 Broad Street | Lynn | 01901

**MOC | Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc.**
133 Prichard Street | Fitchburg | 01420

**NSCAP | North Shore Community Action Programs, Inc.**
119 Rear Foster St., Bldg 13 | Peabody | 01960

**PACE | People Acting in Community Endeavors, Inc.**
166 Williams Street | New Bedford | 02742

**QCAP | Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc.**
1509 Hancock Street | Quincy | 02169

**SELF-HELP | Self-Help Inc.**
780 West Main Street | Avon | 02322

**SMOC | South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc.**
7 Bishop Street | Framingham | 01702

**SPCA | Springfield Partners for Community Action, Inc.**
721 State Street, 2nd floor | Springfield | 01109

**SSCAC | South Shore Community Action Council, Inc.**
7 Bishop Street | Plymouth | 02360

**VOC | Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.**
300 High Street | Holyoke | 01040

**WCAC | Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.**
484 Main Street, 2nd floor | Worcester | 01608
Since its inception in June 2015, the MTC has trained more than 1,200 Community Action and other human services staff and board members through onsite and online training sessions. In addition, the MTC reaches many more through recorded presentations and learning resources. In FY2017, we held 64 individual training sessions with enrollment of approximately 650 Community Action and other human services staff and board members.

The MTC also sponsors Communities of Practice for staff groups that are responsible for some of the mission critical functions within CAAs including planners, chief financial officers, human resource directors, communications directors, VITA site coordinators, and those responsible for service integration.

The MTC works with the MASSCAP network and with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to understand where targeted training and support would aid agencies in meeting national performance standards, ensuring that the Commonwealth’s CAA network continues to improve and lead the nation.

MTC sessions focus on a broad range of topics relevant to non-profit organizational management and operations and anti-poverty programs and services. Trainings are often focused on the nine key national organizational standards categories in which Community Action Agencies across the country are annually assessed. These categories, encompassing 58 individual performance standards, are:

- Consumer Input & Involvement
- Community Engagement
- Community Assessment
- Organizational Leadership
- Financial Operations & Oversight
- Human Resource Management
- Strategic Planning
- Board Governance
- Data & Analysis

That 23 CAAs in MA run more than 75 different programs and services providing service to virtually every city and town in the state.
**MASSCAP Training Center (MTC) Highlights**

**Leadership Development Institute**
The Leadership Development Institute is a comprehensive, interactive series of professional development sessions for mid and senior level managers dedicated to Community Action and human services. The program is designed to identify, refine, develop and practice leadership abilities both personally and professionally.

**The First Class – Class of Spring 2017**
Fifteen participants, eleven from within our Community Action Network and four from outside human service organizations made up the first class, which included five sessions and a Capstone project. Topics were history and philosophy of Community Action; self-awareness and reflection on style; leadership within the agency including management as well as financial management skills; leadership beyond the agency including collective impact, coalitions, collaborations, building relationships and trust; the political process; and data-driven decision making.

**Workforce Development Series**
The series was funded by a state workforce training fund program administered through the Commonwealth Corporation. This pilot year focused on helping Community Action direct service staff in the central and western parts of the state to build skills and develop career pathways to excel and progress within the Community Action Network. We offered three modules, each with a series of three sessions: Customer Service, Supervisory Skills and Employability Skills.

*“Leadership Training Institute is the only one training that I have ever attended and took away so much skill and knowledge.”* 

*“True Leadership comes from people who empower others to make change and grow in all aspects of their work and lives.”* 

*“That wages for low wage workers have barely grown over the last 20 years while incomes for the top 1% have more than tripled.”*
Partnerships

Partnerships are critical to achieving our mission. There is strength in collaboration.

We thank all of our partners:

**Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)**

DHCD is the state’s CSBG lead agency responsible for distributing CSBG dollars to the 23 Community Action Agencies as well as monitoring and training them. As our partner, they support our capacity to serve the network and to run our training center.

**Community Action Partnership (CAP)**

As the national membership organization for Community Action Agencies, it is the mission of the Community Action Partnership to strengthen, promote, represent and serve the network of member agencies to assure that the issues of poverty are effectively presented and addressed.

**Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc. (CAPLAW)**

As a national membership organization of the Community Action network, CAPLAW is dedicated to providing the legal, governance and management resources necessary to sustain and strengthen the national Community Action Agency (CAA) network.

**Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation**

Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation supports organizations that provide services to the underserved and neediest members of our community. Eastern Bank works to ensure that all our neighbors have equal access to employment, education, healthcare, housing, childcare, healthy meals and other essential support services.

**National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP)**

As the national membership organization for state CSBG lead agencies, the National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) is charged with advocating and enhancing the leadership role of states in preventing and reducing poverty.

**National Community Action Foundation (NCAF)**

The National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) seeks to represent the funding and policy interests of Community Action Agencies and their state and regional associations in Washington, D.C. by ensuring the federal government honors its commitment to fighting poverty through support of the Community Action Program.

That approximately 150,000 people in MA have been kept out of poverty thanks to EITC and CTC based on the Supplemental Poverty Measure.
MASSCAP, Inc. Financial Report for Year Ending 9/30/17

Revenue: Mass Training Center Fees
24,229

Membership Dues
138,800

Contributions and Other
8,980

In Kind Contributions
378,296

Total Support and Revenue
1,003,649

Support:
Government Grants and Assistance
453,344

Contributions and Other
8,980

Expenditures
Program Services
824,989
Management & General
169,298
Fundraising
4,838
Total Expenditures
999,125
Change in Net Assets
4,524
96,090
Net Assets 09.30.2017
100,614

MASSCAP revenue comes from government and private grants. Additional revenue is received from MASSCAP agencies as well as fees collected for the MASSCAP training center.
### MA CAA Funding Sources

The core operational funding for CAAs is the Federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). With that funding (more than $16M in FY2017), CAAs are able to leverage additional funds, create partnerships, conduct local assessments and planning, and organize volunteers. CAAs directed more than $780M toward putting end to poverty in 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal CSBG</td>
<td>$16,229,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Non-CSBG</td>
<td>$416,421,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>$155,474,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>$4,204,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>$188,256,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$780,585,542</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is the only federal program with the explicit and overarching goal of reducing poverty, regardless of its cause. CSBG pursues this goal by providing critical core funding to the national network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) – local and trusted institutions – that serve our most needy children, families, and seniors, by providing programs and initiatives of documented success and enormous payback to society.

CSBG funding supports projects that:
- Lessen poverty in communities
- Address the needs of low-income individuals including the homeless, migrants and the elderly
- Provide services and activities addressing employment, education, better use of available income, housing, nutrition, emergency services and/or health

In MA, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) manages CSBG and distributes funds to our 23 CAAs. This flexible resource provides up to 10% of the CAA’s funding.
This administration . . . declares unconditional war on poverty in America . . . The program I shall propose will emphasize this cooperative approach to help that one-fifth of all American families with incomes too small to even meet their basic needs. Our chief weapons in a more pinpointed attack will be better schools, and better health, and better homes, and better training, and better job opportunities . . .

Lyndon B. Johnson: “Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union,” January 8, 1964