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MASSCAP Receives Award in Landmark Federal Diaper Program Pilot

Boston, Mass. (June 1, 2023) – For the first time in history, the federal government is providing funds to support an overwhelming need for diapers across the nation. In the second round of funding for the diaper distribution pilot program, MASSCAP has been selected to provide diapers to low-income families in need across the state. Nationwide, five other states and one tribe have also been awarded new funds. MASSCAP will also fill a gap in Connecticut by providing diapers in the Western part of the state.

In September, the diaper distribution program, announced by the Department of Health and Human Services and run by the Administration for Children and Families, focused on providing diapers to low-income families, was unveiled, and awarded first round funding to six states and one tribe. This current expansion of funding brings the total funding for the pilot to \$16.2 million, with MASSCAP receiving \$1.2 million to address needs in both Massachusetts and Connecticut.

According to Joe Diamond, MASSCAP Executive Director, “This is truly a milestone. The country has never before seen the federal government step in to support under resourced families with diapers. As we know, in Massachusetts, the need is urgent with more than one third of families struggling to afford enough diapers. Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are well-positioned to roll diaper distribution into current programming, such as food and early education programs for low-income families, and we are looking forward to ramping up this program to provide much needed support to already over-burdened clients.”

According to a 2022 study in Health Equity, 36% of Massachusetts families with young children could not afford enough diapers during the pandemic even with federal stimulus payouts, concluding that diaper shortage in the state is not exclusive to the pandemic but a snapshot of a much greater underlying need. Similarly, in Connecticut, seven diaper banks belonging to the national diaper network are distributing \$3M+ diapers annually.

Neither Massachusetts or Connecticut CAAs have had the resources to offer a consistent diaper supply to its families, but all recognize the need across the states and cite repeated requests for diapers. According to Diamond, this resource will boost capacity and only begin to scratch the surface of the diaper needs across both states. MASSCAP plans to institute a ‘hub’ model for diaper distribution, enabling diaper provision to Northern, Southern, and Western Massachusetts agencies and diaper banks, as well as Western Connecticut.

Other states receiving round two funding include Alabama, California, Maryland, Ohio, and Utah, as well as Lake Traverse Reservation.

About MASSCAP

The Massachusetts Association of Community Action's 23 private, non-profit human service and advocacy organizations work to administer key anti-poverty programs in every city and town in the Commonwealth. These organizations serve approximately 600,000 low-income people annually, more than half of them with incomes below 125% of the federal poverty level.

For more than 50 years, Community Action Agencies have been on the front lines of addressing poverty -- administering federal programs, federal community services and community development grants, and state funds. CAAs are economic engines in cities and towns across Massachusetts, providing communities with an annual infusion of over \$500 million in total resources. CAAs generate at least twice that amount helping clients become economically stable and mobile.

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