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Our Mission

The mission of the Rhode Island Community Action Association is to serve Rhode Island’s network of Community Action Agencies through training, and technical assistance, public education, capacity building, and for the development of public policy to address the impact of poverty in Rhode Island.

Our Vision

We envision Rhode Island Community Action Association as a strong unified network of effective community action agencies, guided by excellence and integrity in the promotion of social and economic justice in the state of Rhode Island.

The Social Return on Investment – every dollar given to a CAP Agency through CSBG Funding leverages $19.90 in non-federal service dollars!

Source: 2015 Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) NASCSP
CHALLENGES TO RHODE ISLAND HOUSEHOLDS

Over a third of Rhode Islanders identify affordable food, places to live and utility bills as serious problems.

Agency case studies and focus groups, with over 100 clients per agency, cited a lack of available jobs, health problems/disability, and public transportation as reasons for an inability to meet basic needs. Generational poverty, housing cost burdens, credit card debt and delays in health and dental care cost continue to keep some individuals from moving forward.

42% of those with an unemployed adult in the household indicate that health problems/disability is the cause for unemployment. Over 70% of Rhode Islanders delay health and dental coverage because of cost.

1 out of 5 residents — our neighbors and friends — are served by a Rhode Island Community Action Agency.

35% of Rhode Islanders have a high school degree or less. 65% of Rhode Islanders have some college, technical training or higher education. However, it’s still not enough for most to attain a livable wage in Rhode Island.

Transportation is a significant barrier to accessing employment, job training, youth/teen activities, continuing education, or behavioral/mental health care for adults.
Established in 1992, Rhode Island Association of Community Action Agencies is a trade association for seven (7) Community Action Agencies serving all 39 cities and towns, providing training and technical assistance to the local community action agencies. Rhode Island Association of Community Action Agencies, along with our community partners, work on policies that serve low to moderate income families. With this survey, Rhode Island Association of Community Action Agencies aims to discover the most pressing challenges Rhode Islanders face so that the statewide network of Community Action Agencies will be better prepared to address these state challenges. The following is a breakdown of the survey respondents:

- 1,500 Rhode Islanders participated in the 2017 survey, a 15% response rate
- 500 clients, from all seven community action agencies, participated in the 2017 survey, a 10% response rate
- 75 professional stakeholders participated in the 2017 survey; 37% response rate
- 40% own their own home; 31% reported credit rating as a barrier to homeownership

TOP BARRIERS

Due To Cost In RI

#1 Utility Bills
#2 Healthy Food Choices
#3 Dental Care for the Whole Family
#4 Clothing
#5 College or Continuing Education

TOP BARRIERS

Due To Availability In RI

#1 Jobs/Employment
#2 Financial Literacy
#3 Employment Skills Services
#4 Safe Activities for Youths/Teens
#5 A Safe Place to Live
STATEWIDE SURVEY FINDINGS

BIGGEST Challenges in RI

Compared to last year:
- 49% About the Same
- 36% Worse
- 15% Better

INCOME & FINANCES

- 49% Carry $5000 or more in credit card debt
- 36% Report no credit card debt
- 7% Used a payday loan in the past year

CORE AREAS Residents Need Support for Self-Sufficiency

- #1 Living Wage Employment
- #2 Housing Cost Burdens
- #3 Transportation
- #4 Education Attainment
- #5 Job Training/Skills Services

TOP CONCERNS For Aging Adults in RI

- #1 Employment Opportunities
- #2 Transportation
- #3 Job Training/Skills Service
- #4 Housing Affordability
- #5 Child Care Affordability

#1 Transportation
#2 Home Health Access
#3 Medication Management
#4 Home Maintenance Repairs
#5 Household Services
Since 1965, the Blackstone Valley Community Action Program (BVCAP) has been assisting low income people and empowering them to become self-reliant and responsible citizens. BVCAP serves over 23,000 individuals. The staff of over fifty people reflects the ethnic diversity of our community, enabling us to be sensitive to our clients’ culture and language, while providing the best possible support. For thousands of families, BVCAP is a safety net, providing basic necessities like food, clothing and fuel assistance during difficult times.

- 78% of households have 2 or more members in the household
- 50% of households have at least one child
- 47% of households have at least one member employed
- At least 70% of households have an annual income less than $45,000
**Top 3 Issues for Raising Children**

- 50% Have Issues with Affordable Food
- 46% Have Issues with Paying Utilities – Gas, Water, Electricity
- 35% Have Issues with Affordable Family Dental Care
- 32% Have Issues with Affordable Clothing
- 29% Lack of Safe Activities for Youth/Teens

**INCOME & FINANCES**

- 58% Report NO Credit Card Debt
- 25% Carry $1000-$5000 Credit Card Debt
- 18% Carry $5000+ Credit Card Debt

**EMPLOYMENT**

- 48% Report Health or Disabilities as a Barrier
- 22% Report Lack of Available Jobs as a Barrier
- 15% Report Lack of Required Education as a Barrier

**Children & Youth**

- 50% Are Raising Children
- 29% Report Health or Disabilities as a Barrier
- 22% Report Lack of Available Jobs as a Barrier
- 15% Report Lack of Required Education as a Barrier
- 35% Have Issues with Paying Utilities – Gas, Water, Electricity
- 32% Have Issues with Affordable Clothing
- 29% Lack of Safe Activities for Youth/Teens

**Basic Needs**

- 57% About the Same
- 23% Worse
- 20% Better

**Communities Served:** Pawtucket, Central Falls, Lincoln, Cumberland
Community Action Partnership of Providence (CAPP) serves the residents of Providence as a leading provider of social services. CAPP serves over 11,500 households and 28,000 individuals per year. Many are households facing challenges in the high cost of energy and other basic needs. The most recent Community Needs Assessment conducted in 2016 by CAPP, in collaboration with Rhode Island Community Action Association and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, allows us to profile the Working Families who typically seek out and receive services.

- 75% have 2 or more members in the household
- 61% of households have at least one child
- 49% of households served have at least one member employed
- 20% of households served pay more than $1,000.00 for rent or mortgage
**CHILDREN & YOUTH**

- **63%** About the Same
- **32%** Worse
- **5%** Better

**BASIC NEEDS**

- **58%** Are Behind on Utility Payments
- **50%** Say Cost of Healthy Food is a Problem
- **46%** Have Issues with Affordable Clothes
- **30%** Lack of Reliable Transportation

- **42%** Report Lack of Specific Job Skills/Education as a Barrier
- **37%** Report Health or Disabilities as a Barrier
- **32%** Report Lack of Available Jobs as a Barrier
- **26%** Report Lack of Child Care as a Barrier

**INCOME & FINANCES**

- **46%** Report No Credit Card Debt
- **40%** Household Income Less Than $15,999
- **21%** Spent Savings to Meet Living Expenses

**EMPLOYMENT**

- **61%** Are Raising Children

**Top 3 Issues for Raising Children**

- **53%** Have Availability Issues for Childcare, Pre-School/School Age Programs
- **33%** Struggle to Pay for Medical and Dental Care for the Family
- **32%** Have Trouble Finding Safe Activities for Youth/Teens During Times Out of School

Communities Served:
Providence

*compared to last year*

- **63%** About the Same
- **32%** Worse
- **5%** Better
Community Care Alliance integrates the services of a community action agency and a community mental health center, and annually over 13,000 people are helped by our comprehensive, wrap-around approach. Our practice uses evidence-informed programming to achieve positive outcomes by collaborating with the people we serve and our community partners. The shape of the community in which our clients live looks like this:

- 60% of clients are between 25 and 44 years of age
- 57% of households consist of 2 adults with one or no children
- 18% of clients are single parents
- 74% of clients attained < eighth grade education through some college but no degree
- 66% of clients are employed
- 53% of households have at least one unemployed adult

**POVERTY**
*What Causes Poverty?*

- 97% Do Not Own Their Own Home
- 57% Pay More Than 50% of Their Income for Rent
- 43% Live in Subsidized Housing
- 11% Are Homeless

- 52% Lack of Training
- 48% Drug Addiction
- 40% Not Enough Jobs
- 35% Disability
**CHILDREN & YOUTH**

- **29%** Are Raising Children

**Top 3 Issues for Raising Children**
- **28%** Struggle to Pay for Dental Care for the Family
- **16%** Have Cost and Availability Issues for Childcare, Pre-School/School Age Programs
- **12%** Have Trouble Finding Safe Activities for Youth/Teens During Times Out of School

**BASIC NEEDS**

- **39%** Household Income Less Than $15,999
- **29%** Spent Savings to Meet Living Expenses
- **5%** Used a Pay Day Loan Service

**INCOME & FINANCES**

- **38%** Lack Reliable Transportation
- **37%** Say Cost of Healthy Food is a Problem
- **34%** Have Issues with Affordable Clothes
- **23%** Are Behind in Utility Payments

**EMPLOYMENT**

- **65%** Say Health Problems Prevent Employment
- **46%** Lack Job Skills/Lack of Jobs Impedes Employment
- **17%** Lack of Transportation Impedes Employment

**COMMUNITIES SERVED:**

- **Woonsocket**
Since 1966, Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP) has been providing comprehensive, integrative health, dental and behavioral health, child care programs, family support and development programs, education and job readiness programs and supportive social services. Annually CCAP served over 19,000 households and 35,000 people. These services help people achieve personal and economic self-sufficiency.

- 77% of clients are renters
- 56% of client households have at least one adult who is unemployed
- 48% of clients have at least 1 child living in the home
- 46% of clients have technical or 2 year, post-secondary education

**What Causes Poverty?**

- 57% Lack of Transportation
- 47% Low Wages
- 41% Lack of Jobs
- 28% Drug Use/Addiction/Lack of Affordable Housing

**Housing**

- 74% Pay More Than $600 Per Month in Rent
- 23% Own Their Own Home
**CHILDREN & YOUTH**

- **63%** Have Issues with Paying Utilities – Gas, Water, Electricity
- **61%** Have Issues with Affordable Food
- **49%** Have Issues with Affordable Family Dental Care
- **43%** Have Issues with Affordable Medical Care
- **41%** Have Issues with Safe and Affordable Housing

- **39%** Report Health or Disability Problems as a Barrier to Employment
- **25%** Report Lack of Available Jobs as a Barrier to Employment
- **17%** Report Lack of Affordable Childcare as a Barrier to Employment

**Top 3 Issues for Raising Children**
- **37%** Lack/Cost of Safe Activities for Youth and Teens
- **27%** Cost/Availability of Child Care Programs
- **22%** Lack/Cost of Preschool Programs

**INCOME & FINANCES**

- **49%** Report NO Credit Card Debt
- **28%** Carry Less Than $4,999 in Credit Card Debt
- **23%** Carry $5000+ Credit Card Debt

**BASIC NEEDS**

- **59%** About the Same
- **23%** Worse
- **18%** Better

**EMPLOYMENT**

- **17%** Are Single Parents with Children Under the Age of 18

**Communities Served:**
- Cranston, Foster, Scituate, Coventry

**Looking for work**

- **59%** About the Same
- **23%** Worse
- **18%** Better

**compared to last year**

- **49%** Credit Card Debt
- **28%** Carry Less Than $4,999 in Credit Card Debt
- **23%** Carry $5000+ Credit Card Debt

- **63%** Have Issues with Paying Utilities – Gas, Water, Electricity
- **61%** Have Issues with Affordable Food
- **49%** Have Issues with Affordable Family Dental Care
- **43%** Have Issues with Affordable Medical Care
- **41%** Have Issues with Safe and Affordable Housing

- **39%** Report Health or Disability Problems as a Barrier to Employment
- **25%** Report Lack of Available Jobs as a Barrier to Employment
- **17%** Report Lack of Affordable Childcare as a Barrier to Employment
For over 50 years, East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP) has been providing a wide array of integrated health and human services to people of all ages. Services include Head Start, and Early Head Start; family health, behavioral health, and dental services; family development case management services including social service information and referral and basic human needs; job training; home visiting programs; food pantries; youth programs; the East Bay Coalition for the Homeless; Heating and Energy Services; the Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Feeding and Nutrition Program (WIC) and senior services including case management, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster Grandparents (FGP) and the Ocean State Senior Dining Program (meals in a social setting).

- 56% of households have children <18 residing in the household
- 33% of households have two or more adults and one or more children
- 52% of households have a least one member employed

**POVERTY**

*What Causes Poverty?*

- 43% Lack of Training
- 24% Drug Use/Addiction
- 20% Not Enough Jobs
- 19% Disabilities

**Housing**

- 77% Do Not Own Their Home
- 58% Pay More Than 50% of Income For Rent
- 34% Live In Subsidized Housing
- 6% Are Homeless
**Communities Served:**
East Providence, Barrington, Warren, Bristol, Little Compton, Tiverton, Portsmouth, Middletown, Newport and Jamestown

**Children & Youth**
- 52% About the Same
- 38% Worse
- 10% Better

**Top 3 Issues for Raising Children**
- 35% Cost/Availability of Child Care programs
- 27% Lack of Dental Care for the Family
- 20% Lack of Safe Activities for Youth/Teens

**BASIC NEEDS**
- 20% Cost of Healthy Food is a Problem
- 18% Have Issues Accessing Affordable Clothes
- 15% Are Behind in Utility Payments
- 11% Lack of Reliable Transportation

**EMPLOYMENT**
- 50% Health Problems Prevent Employment
- 37% Report Lack of Job Skills Prevents Employment
- 26% Report Looking For Work
- 11% Lack of Transportation Prevents Employment

**INCOME & FINANCES**
- 42% Households less than $15,999
- 34% Spent Savings to Meet Living Expenses
- 2% Use a Pay Day Loan Service

**Compared to last year**
- 52% About the Same
- 38% Worse
- 10% Better
Tri-County’s Northern Region serves over 15,000 low and moderate income Rhode Islanders annually. The majority of families served by Tri-County work full or part time jobs yet they struggle to meet daily basic needs. This is due to a variety of factors including inadequate work skills, low wage jobs, and the high cost of critical necessities such as daycare, healthcare, auto insurance, housing, and rising consumer debt. Tri-County’s most recent Community Needs Assessment helps to provide a look at the type of individuals and families that rely on this Agency to help them survive in today’s tough economy.

- 82% of clients have at least a HS Diploma or GED
- 31% have at least a 2 year degree or technical certificate
- 63% of households have at least 1 adult working
- 2% of clients receive State cash assistance (Welfare)

**POVERTY**

*What Causes Poverty?*

- **49%** Low Wages
- **44%** Lack of Job Training
- **44%** Not Enough Jobs
- **29%** Lack of Affordable Housing

**HOUSING**

- **65%** Do Not Own Their Own Home
- **47%** Pay More Than 50% of Income for Rent
- **47%** Live in Subsidized Housing
- **38%** Cite Poor Credit as Reason They Do Not Own Home
CHILDREN & YOUTH

58% Are Raising Children

Top 3 Issues for Raising Children
37% Struggle to Pay for Dental Care for the Family
20% Have Cost and Availability Issues with Childcare
12% Have Trouble Finding Safe Activities for Youth/Teens After School

compared to last year
56% About the Same
32% Worse
12% Better

INCOME & FINANCES

29% Household Income Less Than $15,999
20% Spent Savings To Meet Living Expenses
11% Used a Pay Day Loan Service

54% Are Behind in Utility Payments
50% Say Cost of Healthy Food is a Problem
40% Have Issues with Affordable Clothing
16% Lack of Reliable Transportation

BASIC NEEDS

53% Lack of Job Skills or Lack of Jobs Impedes Employment
37% Say Health Problems Prevent Employment
13% Lack of Transportation Impedes Employment

EMPLOYMENT

56% Looking for Work

Communities Served:
North Providence, Johnston, North Smithfield, Smithfield, Burrillville, Glocester
Tri-County’s Southern Region serves over 10,000 low and moderate income Rhode Islanders annually. The majority of families served by Tri-County work full or part time jobs yet they struggle to meet daily basic needs. This is due to a variety of factors including inadequate work skills, low wage jobs, and the high cost of critical necessities such as daycare, healthcare, auto insurance, housing, and rising consumer debt. Tri-County’s most recent Community Needs Assessment helps to provide a look at the type of individuals and families that rely on this Agency to help them survive in today’s tough economy.

- 89% of clients have at least a HS Diploma or GED
- 40% of clients have at least a 2 year degree or technical certificate
- 64% of households have at least 1 adult working
- 2% of clients receive State cash assistance (Welfare)

**POVERTY**
*What Causes Poverty?*

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>Low Wages</td>
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<tr>
<td>43%</td>
<td>Lack of Training</td>
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<td>75%</td>
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<td>Do Not Own Home</td>
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<td>Live in Subsidized Housing</td>
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</table>
Communities Served:
Exeter, Charlestown, Narragansett, Westerly, Hopkinton, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, Richmond, West Greenwich, Block Island

**Children & Youth**

- **Top 3 Issues for Raising Children**
  - 64% Are Raising Children
  - 47% Struggle to Pay for Dental Care for the Family
  - 41% Have Trouble Finding Safe Activities for Youth/Teens After School
  - 30% Have Issues Affording Childcare, Pre-School/School Age Programs

- **Compared to last year**
  - 53% About the Same
  - 28% Worse
  - 19% Better

- **Income & Finances**
  - 53% Spent Savings to Meet Living Expenses
  - 34% Household Income Less Than $15,999
  - 11% Took Early Withdrawal from Retirement

- **Basic Needs**
  - 75% Are Behind in Utility Payments
  - 71% Say Cost of Healthy Food is a Problem
  - 59% Have Issues with Affordable Clothing
  - 38% Trouble Paying for Home Maintenance

- **Employment**
  - 46% Say Health Problems Prevent Employment
  - 25% Lack of Available Jobs
  - 25% Lack of Affordable Child Care
Westbay is the most diverse multi-service agency in Kent County and serves more than 9,500 households each year through a variety of services. Recently Westbay Community Action along with Rhode Island Community Action Association and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services performed a needs assessment, as many people completed this assessment Westbay would like to introduce you to our typical “Working Family” who seeks out assistance in one of our over 40 programs.

- 64% of clients have 2 or more members in the household
- 52% of households have at least one child
- 52% of households served have at least one member employed
- 44% of households own their own homes with 35% of households paying more than $1,000.00 for rent or mortgage

**POVERTY**
*What Causes Poverty?*

- 52% Low Wages
- 51% Lack of Training or Education
- 34% Not Enough Jobs
- 32% Drug Use/Addiction

**HOUSING**

- 44% Own Their Own Home
- 38% Down Payment is a Barrier to Homeownership
CHILDREN & YOUTH

- Have Issues with Affordable Housing: 68%
- Have Issues with Affordable Family Medical Care: 38%
- Have Issues Accessing Affordable Food: 36%
- Have Issues with Affordable Family Dental Care: 35%
- Have Issues with Paying Utilities – Gas, Water, Electricity: 27%

TOP 3 ISSUES FOR raising children:
- Cost of Child Care: 18%
- Lack of Child Care Openings: 11%
- Lack of Safe Activities for Youth/Teens: 13%

INCOME & FINANCES

- Report NO Credit Card Debt: 48%
- Carry $1000-$5000 Credit Card Debt: 33%
- Carry $5000+ Credit Card Debt: 18%

- About the Same: 55%
- Worse: 29%
- Better: 16%

BASIC NEEDS

- Looking for work:
  - Report Health or Disabilities as a Barrier: 41%
  - Report Lack of Available Jobs as a Barrier: 32%
  - Report Lack of Child Care as a Barrier: 19%

COMMUNITIES SERVED:
- Warwick, West Warwick, East Greenwich

EMPLOYMENT

- 52% Are Raising Children
WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE CAUSES POVERTY?

LOW INCOME
SUBSTANCE USE
FAMILY
GREED
BASIC
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
GIVEN RESOURCES
SOCIAL
SSI
PRICES
LOSS
COST OF LIVING
POOR
MONEY
POVERTY
EDUCATION
GOVERNMENT
RHODE ISLAND
CHILD CARE
GENERATION
LACK OF
BASIC NEEDS
MOTIVATION
SINGLE PARENT
RHODE ISLAND
GOVERNMENT
POOR
EDUCATION
MONEY
LOW WAGES
LACK OF
BASIC NEEDS
NOT ENOUGH JOBS
PAYING JOBS
GREED
LOW INCOME
SUBSTANCE USE
FAMILY
LOSS
PARENTING
MENTAL HEALTH
UNEMPLOYMENT
LOW INCOME
EMPLOYMENT
JOBS
COST SUPPORTS
TRANSPORTATION
POVERTY
HEALTH CARE
SERVICES
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
PARENTING
MENTAL HEALTH
ADDICTION
UNEMPLOYMENT
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
TRANSPORTATION
SUPPORT
JOBS
LOW INCOME
SUBSTANCE USE
POVERTY
EMPLOYMENT
SUPPORTS
COST SERVICES
HEALTH CARE
PREGNANCY

(COMMUNITY MEMBER SURVEY: 900 RESPONSES)

(COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY: 75 RESPONSES)
For over 50 years, RI Community Action Agencies have been committed to helping individuals and families achieve personal and economic self-sufficiency.

In 2016, RI Community Action Agencies served more than 175,000 Individuals and 88,000 Households with a variety of wrap-around health, dental, mental health, education, case management, employment and job readiness training, child care, family support, housing and supportive social services.

As a statewide network of community action agencies, we have the expertise and capacity to address a wide range of community needs with dedication, compassion and creativity.

We understand the root causes of poverty and the impact it has on children and families. We continue to be steadfast in our commitment to “helping people and changing lives” in all Rhode Island communities.

For further information about the RI Community Action Association and individual community action agencies, please go to our website at www.ricommunityaction.org

Rhode Island Association of Community Action Agencies would like to thank the thousands of Rhode Islanders who took the time to complete our survey in order to generate the data in this Community Needs Assessment Report. Further, we would like to thank the staff at the Community Action Agencies for their assistance with the development of this report.

This report was funded by the State of Rhode Island’s Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Funds. We are appreciative of Frederick Sneesby, CSBG Administrator, and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services for their generous support of this project.