



COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



SERVING
GREATER HAVERHILL &
THE SEACOAST AREA



978-373-1971

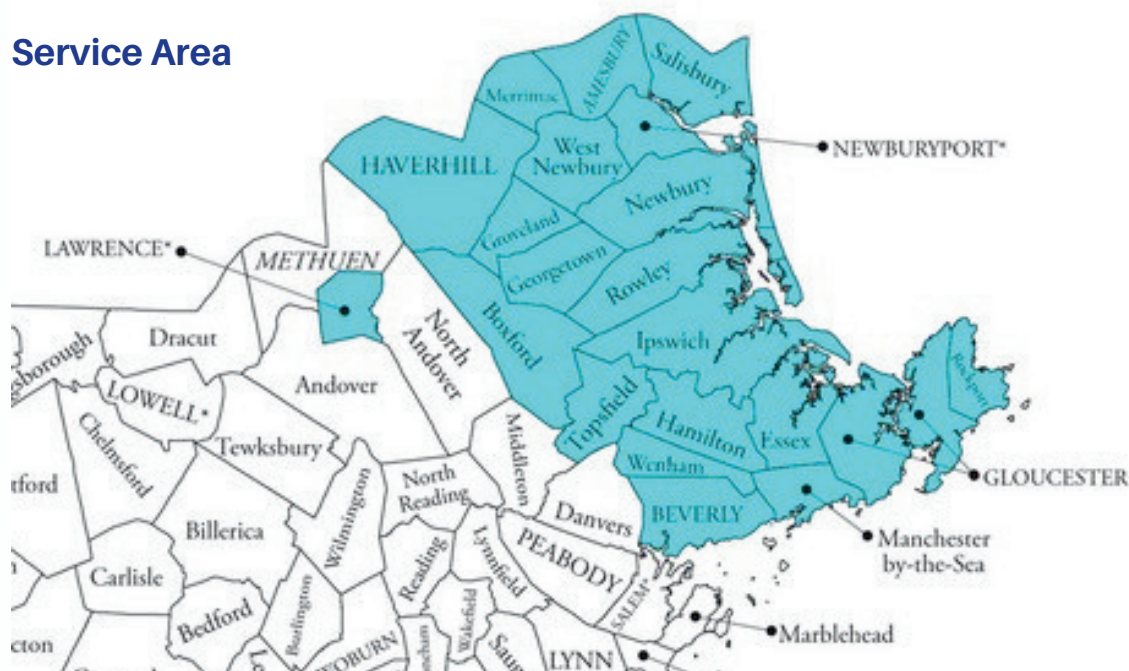


www.communityactioninc.org

COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.

Community Action, Inc. provides resources and opportunities for individuals, families and communities to overcome poverty. CAI envisions strong, thriving communities free of poverty. We build hope and offer assistance with respect and understanding.

Service Area



CAI's service area includes the following cities and towns in Massachusetts: Amesbury, Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury, and West Newbury.

Some CAI programs also serve Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lawrence, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Methuen, Rockport, Topsfield and Wenham.

www.communityactioninc.org



ASSISTANCE WITH RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING AND COURTESY

A Message from Kerri Sheeran Perry

In 2023, Community Action, Inc. expanded its programs and services to meet the growing needs of community members in the region. This momentous growth was possible because of the vision, leadership, and determination of CAI Program Directors and staff. CAI programs increased outreach efforts in 2023, including resource fairs, program outreach, grant partnerships, community events and meetings, and special projects. CAI launched a new website, agency newsletter, and its social media presence greatly expanded (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram).

CAI's Community Services team supported families in crisis, addressing housing, utility, food and other basic needs. This is the front door of the agency, connecting clients to wide-ranging agency supports and referrals to community partners. CAI's Energy program's outward-facing team developed an unparalleled outreach plan that allowed staff to visit communities and partner organizations to educate community members, answer questions about the program and support client applications, benefitting many and increasing energy efficiency for households throughout the Greater Haverhill and Seacoast area.

CAI's Adult Education program nearly doubled course offerings and opportunities for adult learners and CAI's Makelt Haverhill education and workforce program increased outreach and partnerships. The monthly job fairs and English language and digital literacy workshops are game changers, offering community members support, critical skills, and opportunities.

CAI's early learning programs participated in many community milestones in 2023. In October, Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll visited Haverhill to showcase the newly-signed Family Tax Credit. In November, Chair Denise Garlick and Representative Andy Vargas of the Joint Committee on Education visited CAI's Fox Center to learn more about the educational opportunities for young families in Haverhill. In 2023, CAI, along with community partners, was awarded the CPPI (Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative) grant which allowed CAI to renovate three full-day, Head Start classrooms and hire a para-professional for each CPPI classroom, creating multi-tiered support system to support students and educators.

ASSISTANCE WITH RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING AND COURTESY


In 2023, CAI's Family Child Care program developed a four-day workshop to position community members interested in opening a family child care business in their home for success. This workshop is expanding both women-owned businesses in Haverhill and available childcare slots, allowing families to enroll children and return to the workforce. In less than one year, nine family child care businesses opened in Haverhill, creating additional seats for families seeking affordable, high-quality child care.

In November, CAI's Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program welcomed young families and caregivers to the newly constructed WIC clinic on the first floor at 3 Washington Square. Using multiple funding streams and capital funds, CAI leadership planned, designed, renovated and repurposed the space to create an accessible, first-floor office for participants, recognizing the importance of establishing a warm, friendly environment for our youngest participants, their families and the staff that serve them.

Since the pandemic, community members and partners have voiced an increased need for food and nutrition support. In 2023, CAI engaged in many special projects that work to address the nutrition and health needs of families, including: collaborating with local partners focused on food access and equity, providing access to locally sourced, quality farm fresh produce, distributing portable gardening sets, as well as becoming a SNAP outreach partner. CAI is connecting eligible households with critical food and nutrition benefits, helping them to stretch their food budget; and adding fresh produce to their food supply.

CAI engaged in a federal diaper pilot in 2023. Diaper funding is one way that our agency can assist community members with a tangible need that impacts the health and safety of young children, as well as to deepen our connection with a client. This additional touchpoint is an opportunity to discuss a family's financial situation; share information about other resources within our agency and community partners; and learn more about the family's goals, interests and challenges. This allows us to partner with families, providing support and services that can strengthen families' financial security and empowerment opportunities. It also recognizes that CAI is a trusted organization willing to support programs that provide access and opportunities for community members.

Deepening connections and partnerships have been essential and rewarding work during this past year, and we look forward to continuing this commitment to the community in 2024.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2026

To better understand community needs, Community Action, Inc. (CAI) engages in a community-wide assessment every three years to determine what services, programs, and deliverables are a priority for residents. The top three community needs identified in the 2023 community needs survey were: affordable housing, childcare, and the ability to pay bills. More than one-third of respondents also noted afterschool/summer programs, mental health services, access to food, and jobs as other key community concerns. These are similar rankings compared to the 2020 needs assessment. CAI used the results from the 2023 survey to finalize our 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, which is a continuation of our goals related to affordable housing, employment, and food and nutrition security.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

CAI will continue to educate, increase awareness, and enable low-income families to acquire safe, affordable housing with complementary supports in our service area. CAI offers classes and workshops around budgeting and financial literacy to improve the financial standing of low-income individuals, families, and communities.

EMPLOYMENT

CAI will endeavor to improve low-income families' ability to improve their financial circumstances with meaningful, well-compensated employment. The goal is to coach and support clients with necessary tools, skill-building, and confidence to achieve their life goals.

FOOD & NUTRITION SECURITY

CAI seeks to expand community awareness of available food resources, as well as offer assistance completing applications for government funded nutrition programs, encourage consistent redemption of SNAP and WIC food benefits, and provide nutrition education.



CAI BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Community Action, Inc. is comprised of a 18-person volunteer Board of Directors. One-third of the members are elected public officials or their appointees, one third are selected from the private sector and one-third are selected as community representatives of the low- income population.

Public Representatives

Diane Adebayo
Patti Gleason (Assistant Clerk/Secretary)
Alison Lindstrom
Nomsa Ncube
Brienne Walsh
Cornelia Walsh

Community Representatives

Roberta Benson (Head Start PC Rep.)
Jamie Curtis (Head Start PC Rep., Alt.)
Anne Dunn
Roger LeMire, Sr.
Katellynn Lemieux
Bryan MacPhail
Marie Seekell (Clerk / Secretary)
Jane Sutter

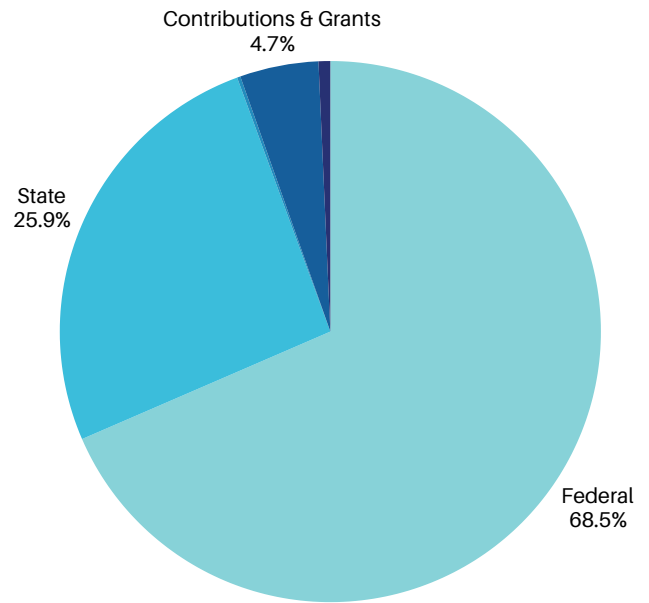
Private Representatives

Douglas Dawes (Vice Chairperson)
Claire Koffman
Harry Korslund (Treasurer)
Caitlin Masys
Lucinda Nolet (Chairperson)
Kathleen Shaw

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Sources of Revenue

Federal:	\$14,696,357	68.5%
State:	\$5,565,467	25.9%
Program Service Fees:	\$50,803	0.2%
Contributions & Grants:	\$1,015,638	4.7%
In Kind & Misc:	\$141,589	0.7%



Total Funding \$ 21,469,854

Use of Funds

Head Start	\$7,142,374
Energy Assistance	\$5,973,350
WIC	\$2,351,791
Family Day Care	\$2,032,679
Community Services	\$1,686,730
Administration	\$1,351,361
Education & Training	\$320,269
Housing Services	\$281,164
Fundraising & Program Development	\$44,588



Total Uses \$ 21,184,306



Federal

69%



State

26%



Total Funding

\$21,469,854



Gardening Initiative

In Summer 2023, we launched a Gardening Initiative which provided GrowBags, quality soil, and seedlings to CAI's early childhood programs and over 75 community households. The initiative aimed to inspire young children about gardening and enable families to enjoy gardening at home, making it accessible for all. Participants were excited to explore gardening and enjoy their harvests.

CSA Share

CAI's CSA Share Initiative connected program participants to fresh produce from local farms for 8 weeks, as well as recipes based on the items in the share. This program also provided education about how to access and maximize other available food supports, in order to help eligible households meet their nutritional needs. Participants were very positive about the experience, noting that the produce was delicious and helped them to extend their food budget.



2023 Gratitude Project

The 2023 Gratitude Grant from the United Way of Massachusetts Bay supported Thanksgiving efforts for Community Action, Inc. and multiple community partners. Gratitude Grantees were able to determine the best way to support community members for the holiday, whether it be providing a gift card, distributing a Thanksgiving food basket, or serving a holiday meal. Regardless of the type of support provided, the goal was the same - to ensure that community members could access the assistance needed to enjoy their holiday.

CAI PROJECTS

BUILDING FUTURES, TOGETHER



TEE IT UP GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Tee It Up golf tournament, featuring eighty-eight golfers and numerous local sponsors, generated more than \$42,000 in funds for Community Action, Inc. programs. The funds raised will go towards essential services such as housing assistance, job training, and educational programs, making a tangible difference in the lives of those in the community.

Family Day Care Business Workshop

In 2023, Community Action, Inc. launched a workshop to assist women in starting a Family Day Care business from home. The workshop covers Family Day Care basics, Early Education and Care regulations, the EEC licensing process, and other essential topics. CAI aims to boost women-owned businesses in the Merrimack Valley, support women through the licensing process, and increase available family day care slots, ultimately enhancing the workforce.



Head Start & Operation Warm

CAI Head Start partnered with Operation Warm and AutoFair Subaru of Haverhill to provide sneakers and socks to Head Start children over the age of two. The event was a remarkable success, with Subaru volunteers delighting in the smiles of children as they were fitted for their preferred sneakers. This charitable initiative truly made a positive impact!



Head Start Impact & Results:

In 2023, our program focused on deepening connections with families. Some of the activities included:

- Scheduled monthly in person parent engagement activities including book distributions, playground activities and a field day.
- Partnered with Haverhill public schools through the CPPI grant bringing services into the classrooms for speech, OT and PT.
- Increased the use of technology to ensure timely communication with families in their preferred language.
- Worked with interpreter services to facilitate connection and communication with families in their preferred language.

Head Start

Head Start is the most successful, longest running, national school readiness program in the United States. Children who attend Head Start participate in a variety of educational activities, receive nutritious meals and are supported in a safe and engaging learning environment. They also receive free developmental and behavioral screenings.

Head Start teachers offer children positive and loving guidance, acceptance, individualization, and the opportunity to learn and experience success. Head Start children socialize with others, increase their vocabulary and language arts, solve math and science problems, improve their listening skills, and have experiences that foster self-confidence.

IMPACT
SNAPSHOT

250+

FAMILIES
SERVED

273

CHILDREN
ENROLLED

82%

ELIGIBLE FAMILIES
SERVED

247

Medical Exams

95

Dental Exams

122

Social/Emotional
Screenings

140

Vision Screenings

124

Hearing Screenings

83

Developmental
Screenings



HEAD START - USE OF FUNDS

Salary & Fringe Benefits (75.2%)	\$4,697,760
Occupancy (8.8%)	\$616,371
Contractual Providers (2.4%)	\$209,851
Staff Training (1.5%)	\$233,799
Food (2.1%)	\$133,840
Transportation (0.6%)	\$70,626
Program support (9.4%)	\$362,962

Total Head Start Usage:
\$6,325,209

Efforts to Prepare Children for Kindergarten:

- Held an on-site Kindergarten registration event at the Fox Center, in collaboration with Haverhill Public Schools
- Strengthened relationships and increased collaboration with area public schools to support children and families
- Additional focus on Social Emotional skill development, in response to the demonstrated need following the pandemic

Information on Parent Involvement Opportunities:

In 2023, the program had 218 parents volunteer in some capacity. We offer a variety of parent involvement opportunities, such as attending events, participating in home visits, volunteering in the classrooms, and serving on Policy Council.

In person parent engagement activities were scheduled monthly at the centers. This includes book distributions, playground activities and field day.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Held two FCC Educator Licensing support workshops in 2023, resulting in 8 newly Licensed Educators and 2 Certified Assistants
- Welcomed 5 new contracted educators with Community Action, Inc.
- 15 educators participated in a gardening initiative which included planting and growing their own gardens with the children
- 2 Staff Members received Bachelors Degrees

Family Child Care

The Family Child Care (FCC) program is a network of EEC licensed Child Care Educators who offer care and education in a family home setting. Family Child Care Educators who are part of this network provide the following:

- Developmentally appropriate materials and experiences.
- Welcoming and positive atmosphere designed to encourage self-confidence, independence and intellectual curiosity.
- Services that provide flexible care options for continuing education and working parents.

FCC staff is committed to assisting participating educators to provide high quality professional early care and education services that meet the social, emotional and developmental needs of children. The support provided includes technical and educational visits to the family childcare homes by FCC staff. Staff also engage with parents and caregivers to offer community resources, as needed.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

153

CHILDREN
SERVED

30+

EDUCATOR
HOMES

27

VOUCHER FAMILIES

122

INCOME ELIGIBLE AND PRIORITY
POPULATION CONTRACTS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- All WIC programs in Massachusetts implemented a hybrid model of appointments in August 2023, offering participants greater flexibility with options for in-person and phone appointments
- Distributed farmers market checks to eligible families at both farmers markets and at the WIC offices during the summer of 2023



Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC)

The Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program provides services that support the health and nutrition needs of pregnant individuals and children under the age of five. These services include:

- Benefits for nutritious foods and infant formula
- Personalized nutrition consultations
- Referrals for medical and dental care, health insurance, childcare, housing, fuel assistance, and other community services
- Breastfeeding support and access to Peer Breastfeeding Counselors
- Nutrition and health workshops on a variety of topics including meal planning, maintaining a healthy weight, picky eaters, caring for a new baby, and shopping on a budget
- Immunization screenings
- Farmers Market benefits to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer, in collaboration with the USDA.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

280+

ONLINE NUTRITION
CLASSES COMPLETED

3800+

WOMEN &
CHILDREN



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Haverhill Public Library visits with ESOL Beginning and ESOL Basic students. Students learned about HPL services, resources, and several students signed up and received library cards.
- Bus information session and bus tour with Merrimack Valley Regional Transit.
- Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School presentation on Free Summer Career Training Programs in Welding, Auto Mechanics, Culinary, etc.
- Presentations from NECC on the Transition to College Program and Direct Enrollment.

Adult Learning Center of Greater Haverhill

The Adult Learning Center at Community Action, Inc. helps adult learners further educational and career goals. We offer two distinct programs: ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) for English language learners and High School Equivalency (GED/HSE) courses for adults seeking a high school equivalency credential. We provide students with a well-rounded, holistic education in areas including, English language acquisition, digital literacy, workforce preparation and career exploration, transition to college, critical reading and writing skills, STEM, and civics. We also offer individualized advising support to help students overcome barriers to success. In general, we empower students with the skills needed to navigate twenty-first century life and to thrive in future endeavors.

Competitive DESE/ACLS FY24-28 Grant Awarded

In 2022, we were awarded a competitive grant from Adult and Community Learning Services at the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that nearly doubled our budget. As part of this increase in funding, we are able to provide additional classes and services, including night ESOL and High School Equivalency courses, which enhances access and opportunity to our classes for working individuals.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

70

HSE
STUDENTS

80

ESOL
STUDENTS

10

PASSED
HSE EXAM

1

ATTENDING
POST SECONDARY



COMMUNITY SERVICES

Drop-In Center

The Drop-In Center (DIC) serves as Haverhill's oldest and only drop-in day program for individuals dealing with, or at risk of, homelessness. As a year-round day shelter, the DIC is a safe haven, providing a range of services and assistance including:

- Breakfast available Monday - Friday and "to-go" lunch
- Clothing and hygiene products
- Case management and benefits advocacy
- Referrals to community resources

Haverhill Office

The Community Services Department provides a wide range of services related to emergency services; with an emphasis on housing, homeless prevention, food and nutrition assistance, utility mediation, benefit advocacy, and landlord/tenants' rights and responsibilities. The Haverhill Office provides assistance to residents of Haverhill, Boxford, Groveland, Georgetown and Rowley.

Amesbury Center

The Community Action, Inc. (CAI) Amesbury Center works with clients to solve problems and access resources to help the client and the client's family become self-sufficient. Clients receive information and assistance to access public benefits and resources that will help them become more financially secure. Assistance is also provided to low-income families with budget planning and landlord/tenant concerns. The Amesbury Center provides assistance to residents of Amesbury, Merrimac, Newburyport, Newbury, West Newbury and Salisbury.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

4,215

PREPARED
MEALS

200+

RECEIVED
CLOTHING
ASSISTANCE

175+

RECEIVED
HOUSING
ASSISTANCE

400+

RECEIVED
FOOD
SUPPORTS

450+

RECEIVED
UTILITY
ASSISTANCE



HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT

First Time Home Buyer Program

Education classes are offered to area residents interested in learning how to purchase their first home. The classes are offered over three nights for a total of 9 hours. The program is certified by the Massachusetts Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) and Mass Housing. It includes training on a variety of topics related to home ownership including:

- obtaining a mortgage
- budgeting & credit
- housing search & appraisals
- condominium purchase
- legal issues & insurance
- housing law & tax advantages
- home inspection

Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association

Presidential Gardens is a 200-unit, subsidized rental development that offers one, two and three-bedroom apartments. In 1990 with strong assistance from CAI, the Presidential Gardens' tenants formed their own non-profit corporation, The Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association (PGNA). The PGNA purchased the property from the former owners and preserved the property as an affordable rental neighborhood. The PGNA has secured \$15 million over the past 30 years to renovate the neglected units into safe, modern, apartments with a new community center, laundry rooms and playgrounds.

Today Community Action, Inc. is working with the PGNA Board of Directors to construct 42 new one-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments. This project is currently in the planning stage.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

102

FIRST TIME HOME
BUYER CERTIFICATES

25

FIRST TIME
HOME BUYERS

100+

RECEIVED FOOD
SUPPORTS

50+

YOUTH IN
PROGRAMS



Program Highlights

- The fuel assistance team toured area senior centers and attended community events to share information about the program, provide application assistance, and connect community members with other agency programs and services.
- The Energy department went through a restructuring period and brought on a new management team, including a new Director and Assistant Director.
- Additional staff members, including an Energy Department bookkeeper and a bi-lingual intake staff, have resulted in the program serving more clients this year than in prior years.
- The HEARTWAP team more than tripled the number of clients provided with new heating systems. The team continues to provide green energy alternatives when available.



Energy Programs

The energy program staff administer the LIHEAP and HEARTWAP programs and provide application access in Haverhill, Amesbury and Newburyport. CAI also participates in an Oil Co-Op program that allows clients to purchase oil at a discounted price. Eligibility for heating assistance and heating system assistance is based on household size and income.

Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP, also known as Fuel Assistance, helps income-eligible households pay a portion of their heating bills or 30% of their rent if the heat is included. The program operates from November 1 to April 30.

Energy Services Offered to Area Residents:

- The HEARTWAP program provides heating system repair and replacement services to eligible low-income homeowners. The program serves as an emergency intervention service to provide assistance to low-income homeowners having problems with the operation of their primary heating system. This program operates year-round.
- The Weatherization Assistance Program provides up to \$7500 in added insulation, and general plugging of air leaks to homes and apartments for households eligible for HEAP.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

3,124

RECEIVED UTILITY
PAYMENTS

188

INDIVIDUALS
AVOIDED UTILITY
SHUT OFF

165

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED
HEATING SYSTEM REPAIRS OR
REPLACEMENTS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Job Fair Totals:

- 11 job fairs were held
- 46 employers & resources at job fairs
- 16 Dedicated Volunteers and AmeriCorps Members

Digital Literacy & Equity:

- 7 courses offered
- 66 graduates
- 1,056 hours for a total of training

Walk-In English Classes:

- 100 classes for a total of 150 hours of training
- 84 English Language Learners served
- 877 total walk-ins

MakeIT Haverhill

MakeIT Haverhill is a Community Action, Inc. program located in the Mt. Washington area in Haverhill. Our mission is to assist families in attaining financial stability by providing English language, digital literacy training, and access to technology, employment, and career advancement.

Workforce Development:

An opportunity for job seekers to network and learn about employment opportunities offered by local companies and organizations in various industries such as advanced manufacturing, transportation, healthcare, social services, state and local government, and many more.

Digital Literacy and Equity:

Providing access to digital technology, internet, and comprehensive technology-based training to help residents compete in the modern job market.

English Classes:

Walk-in classes providing part-time instruction to help speakers of other languages develop foundational English skills.

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

399

JOB SEEKERS
SERVED

3,331

HOURS OF SERVICE BY
VOLUNTEERS AND
AMERICORPS MEMBERS

1206

TOTAL HOURS
OF TRAINING



Community Action, Inc. Locations

MAIN OFFICE

Central Administration
Community Services
Education & Training
Energy Programs
Family Child Care
Housing Development
WIC

3 Washington Square
Haverhill, MA 01830
Main: 978-373-1971
WIC: 978-374-2191

AMESBURY CENTER

44a Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913
Main: 978-388-2570

DROP-IN CENTER

16 Ashland Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
Main: 978-241-9621

FOX CENTER

Early Head Start
Head Start

75 Elm Street
Haverhill, MA 01830
Main: 978-372-5052

SEACOAST CENTER

Early Head Start
Head Start

447 Merrimac Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
Main: 978-499-8357

MAKEIT HAVERHILL

301 Washington Street
Haverhill, MA 01832
Main: 978-377-0187



3 Washington Square
Haverhill, MA 01830



www.communityactioninc.org