

# Community Assessment Report And Strategic Plan

## Fiscal Years 2021-23

Community Action, Inc.  
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**Submitted to:**

Department of Housing & Community Development  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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## Executive Summary

2020 was a year of transition for our country, our community, and for Community Action, Inc. Much of the transition and upheaval was unexpected. No one could have imagined the racial tensions and insidious pandemic that would grip our community and dismantle our economy and our financial security. Covid-19 brought many families to their knees and to our agency for the first-time seeking help, guidance, and a path forward.

2020 was an election year that divided community members, made legislation difficult to pass, and became another weight for community members to balance. The year was also a transitional year for Community Action. John Cuneo, who led the agency for 34 years, retired leaving a lasting legacy of programming, community building, and compassion. Our Director of Early Learning, Deborah Linett, also retired after more than three decades with the Agency. These two leaders left behind a strong foundation that helped CAI withstand the incredible challenges that 2020 would bring.

With transition came opportunity. Kathie Cote, a leader in CAI's early learning programs, would take over as Head Start Director. I accepted the position of Chief Executive Officer of the Agency in October. To take the reins during a national crisis may seem risky, but the strong Board, dedicated staff, and foundational mission guided our decisions.

The mission is CAI's guiding light -- its compass -- and if 2020 proved nothing else, it proved the absolute need for a foundational guide for our staff, our community, and our clients. CAI's renewed mission kept the Agency moving forward, kept our anxiety and fears at bay, and forged a path for our staff and Board to continue this important work.

CAI was able to conduct a community assessment prior to the world slowing down in March. The team commenced the community assessment process in 2019 and, because of the constant turmoil of 2020, it continued up until the day this document was approved by the Board. To no one's surprise, affordable housing, employment, the ability to pay bills, and access to high quality, affordable childcare topped the list of priority needs across CAI's region. Anecdotally, and through the review of statistical and community assessment data, these areas of need rise to the top and in 2020, with the pandemic, the needs were exacerbated.

Many data sources were used to describe and demonstrate need in the cities and towns CAI serves. The U.S. Census Bureau's Decennial Census of 2010, and the 2011-2015 American Community Surveys (ACS) were the primary sources. Essex County Community Foundation's Impact Essex County was also a tool that was consulted. CAI staff worked closely with the MASSCAP Planner's Group and SMC partners in 2019 to develop a data tool with demographics for every community in Massachusetts. The project funded and supported by DHCD was an important tool in developing this Report.

Looking forward to 2021, we expect no immediate relief from the problems caused by COVID-19. CAI, so crucial to the neediest among us, must stay open and continue to serve. We are well aware of the fiscal strains caused by the pandemic, and the demands that are being placed on families. This Community Assessment Report will help to guide agency decisions through the pandemic and beyond.

# Board Authorization

## Community Action, Inc.

### **Community Assessment Report Board Authorization December 30, 2020**

#### **December Board Meeting**

Prior to the December 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Community Action, Inc. Board of Directors, each Director received a copy of the proposed Community Assessment Report. Each Board member reviewed the Community Assessment Report and at the December meeting, Board members had an opportunity to discuss, comment and ask questions about the document.

Pursuant to Organizational Standards 3.5 and 6.1, the Community Action, Inc. Board of Directors approved the 2021-23 Community Assessment Report on December 30, 2020.

The Community Assessment Report was approved by the Board of Directors present, as documented in the Minutes of the meeting.

Attested:



Lucinda Nolet, Board Chairperson

Date: December 30, 2020

# Community Action, Inc. Board of Directors

## Community Representatives to Low-income Population

Bryan MacPhail - Haverhill/Acre  
Roger Lemire - Haverhill/Citywide  
Anne Dunn – Haverhill/Citywide  
Gerald Schiavoni - Haverhill/Mount Washington  
Cali Jensen - HS Policy Council  
Jane Sutter - Newburyport  
Marie Artman - Merrimac/Groveland  
Katelynn Lemieux- Amesbury

## Private Sector

Claire Koffman - Banking  
Harry Korslund- Business  
Harold Lloyd - Veterans  
Lucinda Nolet - Human Services  
Kathleen Shaw - Early Childhood Ed  
Caitlin Masys - Law

## Public Sector

Doug Dawes - State Rep. Lenny Mira  
Patti Gleason - State Sen. Diana DiZoglio  
Alison Lindstrom - Amesbury Mayor Gove  
Brienne Walsh - Congressman Seth Moulton  
Nomsa Mcube - Haverhill Mayor Fiorentini  
Diane Adebayo - State Rep. Andy Vargas  
Cornelia Walsh - Newburyport Mayor Holaday

## Strategic Planning Lead Committee Members

Thank you to all Board, staff, community members, and service providers who contributed to this submission. Chairperson Lucinda Nolet, Community Services Director Robert Gould, and Project Manager Greg Betley were instrumental in the editing and review of this document. This was a team effort.

## Agency Description

On November 3, 1965, following President Lyndon B. Johnson’s enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, a group of Haverhill residents, committed to assisting low-income residents access services and anti-poverty programming, formed the Haverhill Community Action Commission (HAVCAC), serving five cities and towns: Haverhill, Amesbury, Newburyport, Merrimac, and Groveland. The group hit the ground running, creating programs and opportunities for low-income people living in the region. In 1966, HAVCAC was awarded a Head Start project where 200 pre-school aged children enrolled in a summer program, the inaugural year for CAI’s cornerstone program that has educated and cared for thousands of children and families. During HAVCAC’s first seven years, the agency started a year-round Head Start program, opened a neighborhood youth center, formed a credit union, developed programs for Spanish speaking residents, organized a food cooperative, and hired 27 full and part-time employees. In 1978, the Board changed the agency’s name to Community Action, Inc.

55 years after it opened its doors and crafted its first charter, CAI’s dedicated Board and staff continue to further the mission of alleviating poverty. Each day CAI programs serve low-income clients by providing access to education, food, energy resources, eviction prevention, nutrition supports, food and clothing distributions, and referrals. CAI is a trusted resource for community members in need and has doubled its service area, now serving approximately 15,000 individuals each year, spanning 7,000 families in the following eleven cities and towns: Amesbury, Boxford, Groveland, Georgetown, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury. WIC also serves Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lawrence, Manchester, Rockport, Topsfield, and Wenham. CAI has offices in Amesbury, Newburyport, and Haverhill, Massachusetts. See list of programs and services in Appendix.

CAI is a Community Services Block Grant eligible, private, non-profit organization, as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. As such, a minimum of one-third of CAI’s tripartite Board must be democratically selected from representatives of low-income individuals and families who reside in the geographic area being served by the Agency. The remaining two-thirds of the Board are made up of representatives from the public and private sectors.

With a budget of \$14,000,000 and a staff of 140, CAI is committed to the principles that President Johnson openly avowed in his War on Poverty speech, to support “an America in which every citizen shares all the opportunities of his society, in which every man has a chance to advance his welfare to the limit of his capacities.” CAI works with many community partners and organizations, including: residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, faith communities, government entities, and multiple anchor institutions in education and health care to develop, support and provide opportunities for low-income residents to realize economic self-sufficiency.

## Mission Statement

Community Action, Inc. provides resources and opportunities for individuals, families and communities to overcome poverty.<sup>1</sup>

During the February 2020 Board meeting, CAI's Board of Directors engaged in a mission workshop. The group discussed the words, the meaning, and the value of the purpose of why we do what we do. The timing of the workshop was pivotal. Unbeknownst to the 20 individuals in the room, the Board would not meet again in person for the balance of the year. After much discussion, the Board determined that the simplicity and phrasing was relevant and perfectly matched the values of the Agency and the goals of its programs and services. The mission remained unchanged.

## Vision Statement

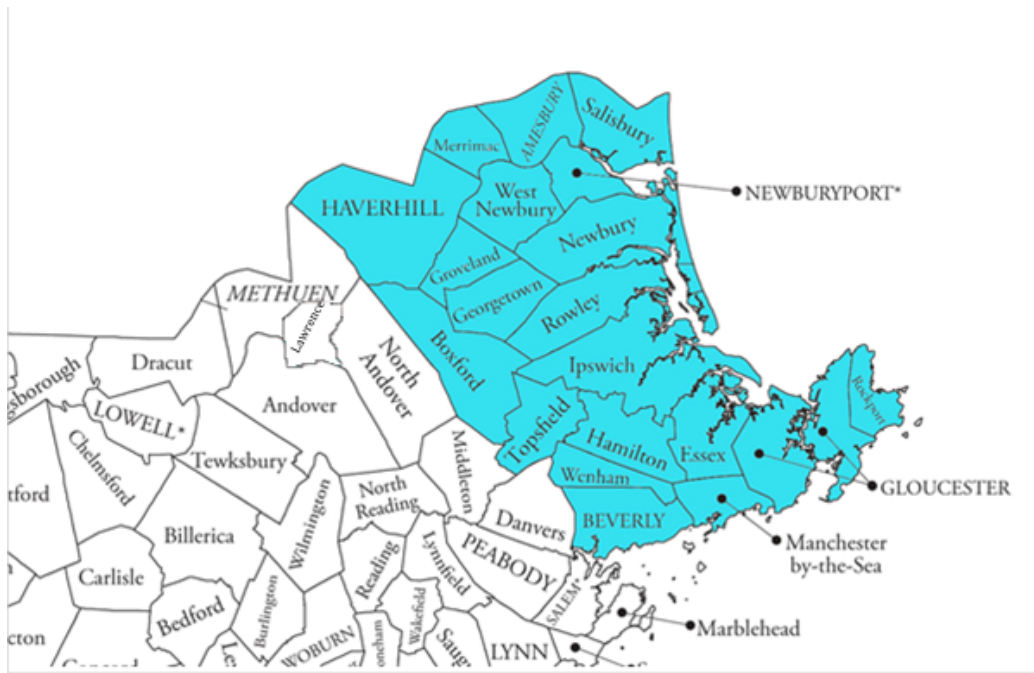
CAI envisions strong, thriving communities free of poverty. We build hope and offer assistance with respect and understanding.

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Organizational Standard 4.1, CAI's mission statement was reviewed by the full Board on February 26, 2020 to review the wording, the message and that it represents the Agency work.

## Community Profile

Community Action, Inc. serves eleven cities and towns in the Merrimack Valley, located in the Northeast corner of Essex County, Massachusetts, anchored by the Merrimack River which runs through the region. Historically, the area has relied on farming, shipping, and manufacturing to employ its residents with a living wage -- industries dependent on the Merrimack River to power its mills and water its crops. Manufacturing experienced a sharp decline after WWII. Recently, advanced manufacturing is returning to the region, creating a demand for a trained, skilled workforce with some post-secondary education. Farming is also making a return and there are more farms in Essex County now than there were twenty years ago.

Community Action's service area spans nearly 180 square miles, with a population of 155,435 (see chart below). The CSBG designated towns are: Amesbury, Groveland, Haverhill, Merrimac, and Newburyport. The towns of Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury are not part of CAI's CSBG designated towns but make up CAI's service area. Additionally, WIC programming serves Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester, Rockport, Topsfield, and Wenham.



## Haverhill

Haverhill, Massachusetts is a gateway city located 35 miles north of Boston. Haverhill is expansive, with 35.6 square miles of land including 1,000 acres of Conservation Areas, distinct neighborhoods, agricultural and commercial districts, and a downtown area located on the banks of the Merrimack River, a powerful river that once supported a robust, waterpower dependent, leather manufacturing industry during the Industrial Revolution. It has convenient access to interstate 495, as well as two rail terminals, with access to MBTA commuter rail to Boston’s North Station and AMTRAK service to Portland, Maine as well as Boston.

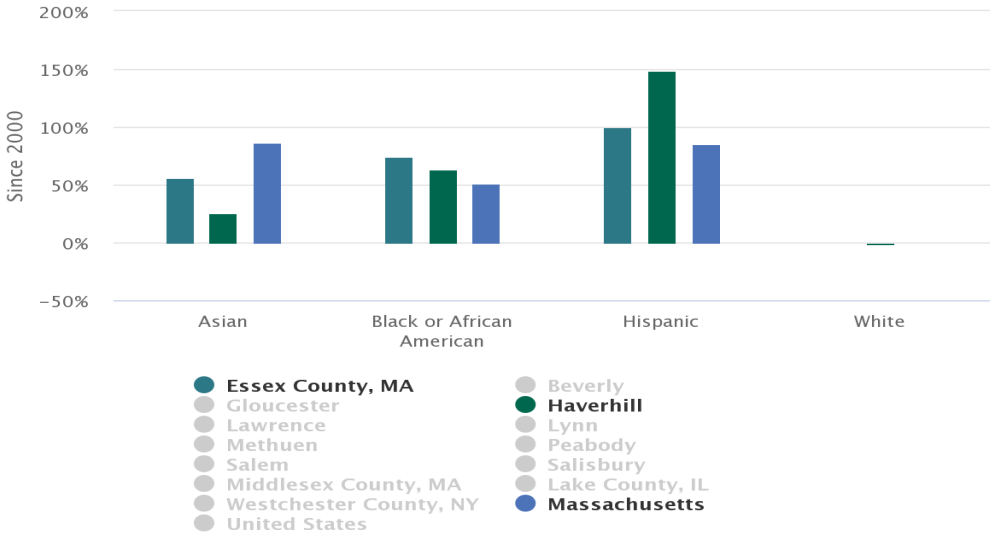
Shoe manufacturing was the leading industry in Haverhill for close to 200 years, until the post-war industrial decline required Haverhill to engage in economic diversification which has suffered fits and starts. Today’s industrial, manufacturing, and employment landscape in Haverhill is varied and includes: agriculture, retail, food manufacturing, health, high tech, and research. Ward Hill Industrial Park supports over 120 businesses, but few low-income residents.

There has been an ongoing renewal of Haverhill’s downtown and riverfront area, with an anchor of a UMass-Lowell satellite campus in the new Harbor Place buildings. Many small businesses, primarily restaurants and personal services, had been revitalizing the core of the city. Many of these are now at risk due to the Covid impact. Southwick, a large clothing manufacturer in Haverhill shuttered in 2020, creating an economic and employment chasm for the community.

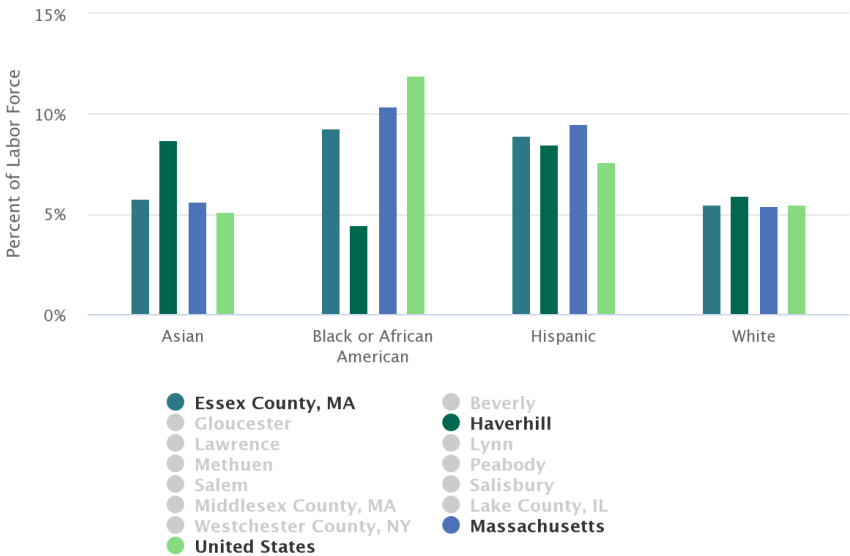
In Community Action’s catchment area, Haverhill is the largest, most diverse city with more than 65,000 residents<sup>2</sup>. The face of Haverhill continues to change. In the early part of the century, Haverhill’s Asian population had increased by 26%. The Black population had increased by 64% in that same time period. Most recently, Haverhill’s Hispanic population has seen the largest increase of 149% since 2000 (ACS). 12,834 Haverhill residents identify as Hispanic (2014-2018 ACS). Mixed race population has also increased substantially, and these residents are also on the lower end of the economic spectrum. Median income reported by ACS is \$22,475, with 20% below poverty level. This reflects a large immigrant community from the Caribbean and Central America.

<sup>2</sup> Haverhill represents over 40% of the population of CAI’s entire 11 city and town region.

Change in Total Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-18

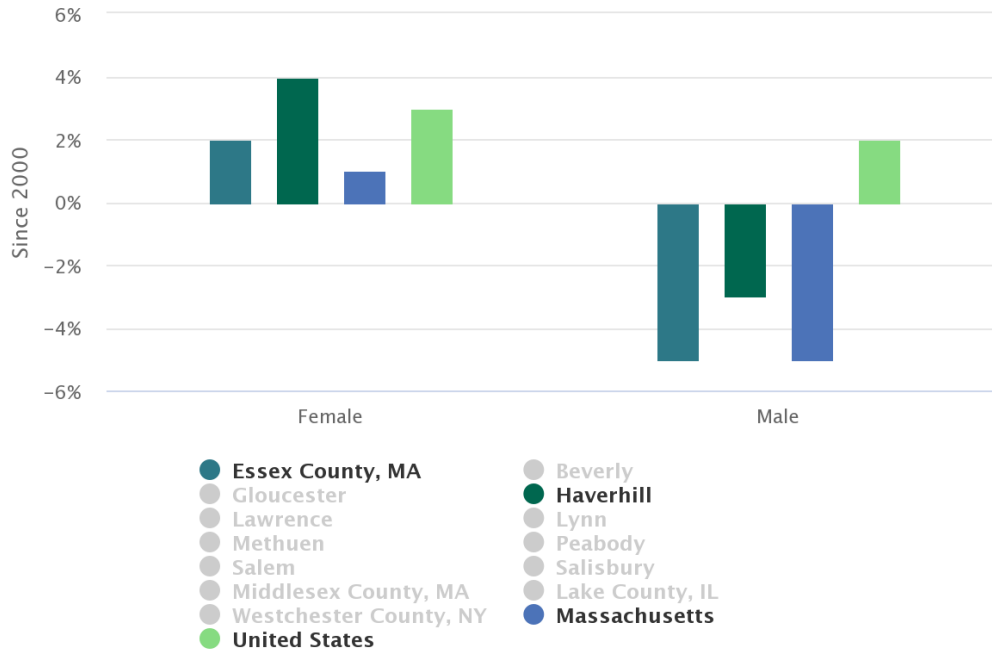


Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-17

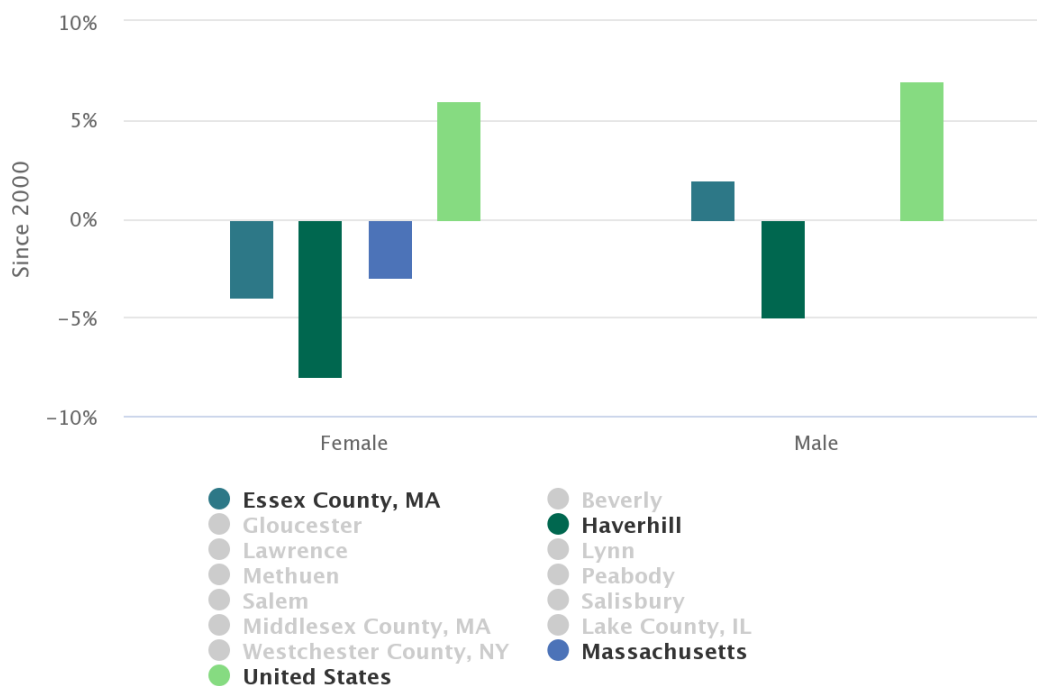


Haverhill has recently experienced a slight increase in births, with a 2% increase of children under the age of 5, but the remarkable 60% increase in the elderly population (people over 65) demonstrates the critical need to also address elder services and programming across the city.

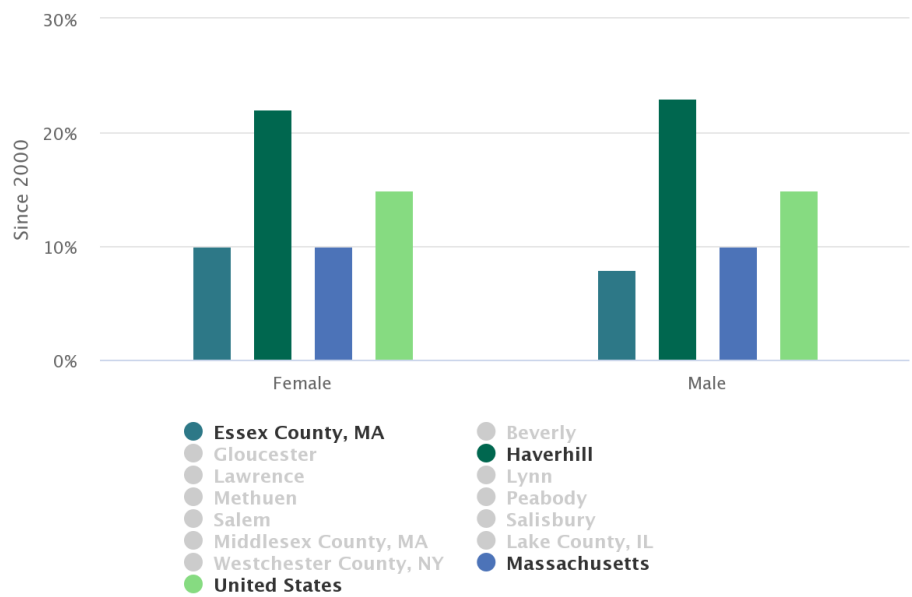
### Change in Population by Age and Gender, 2013-17: Under 20



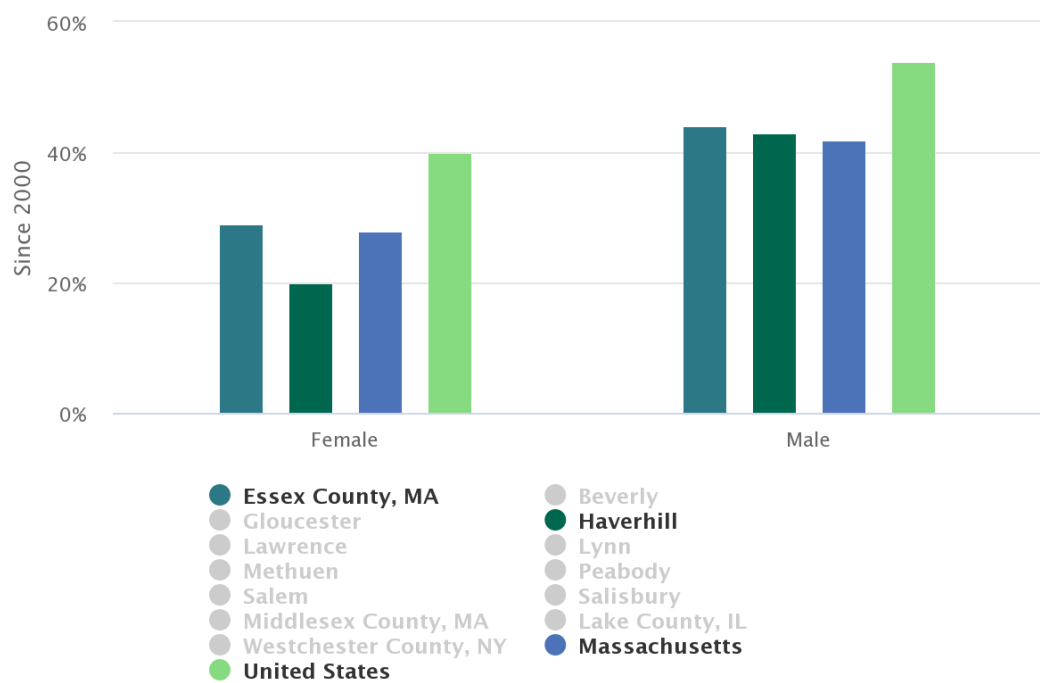
### Change in Population by Age and Gender, 2013-17: 20-39



Change in Population by Age and Gender, 2013-17:40-59

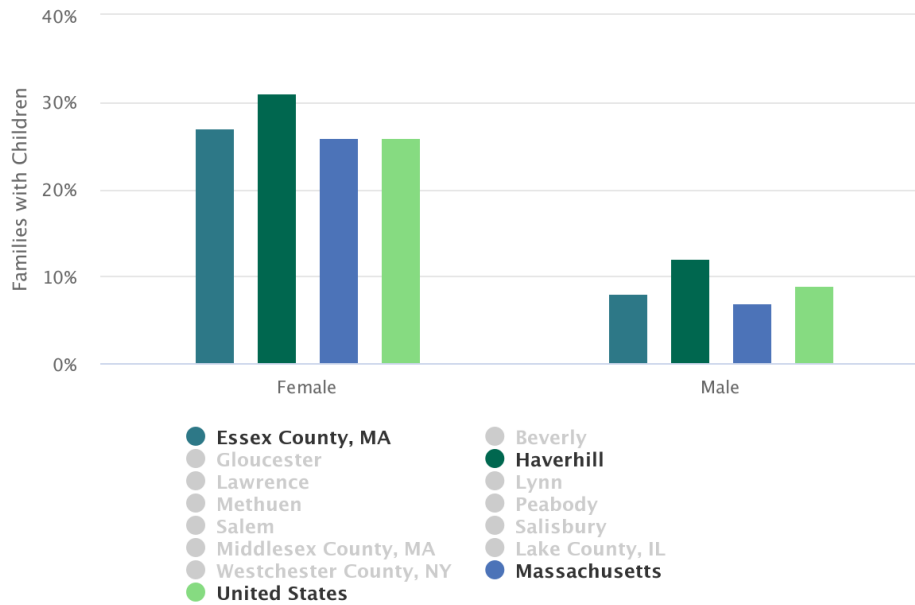


Change in Population by Age and Gender, 2013-17: 60-84

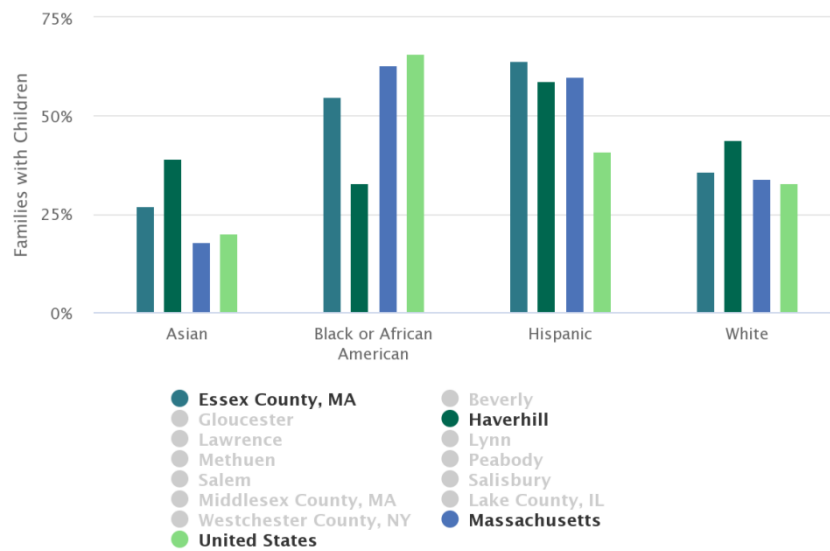


41 % of Haverhill’s family households with children under 18 are single-parent, mostly female-headed, households. This is reflected in the data CAI collects from clients. 45% of households in CAI’s Head Start program are headed by a single female parent. Single-parent households struggle with housing costs more than two-parent households.

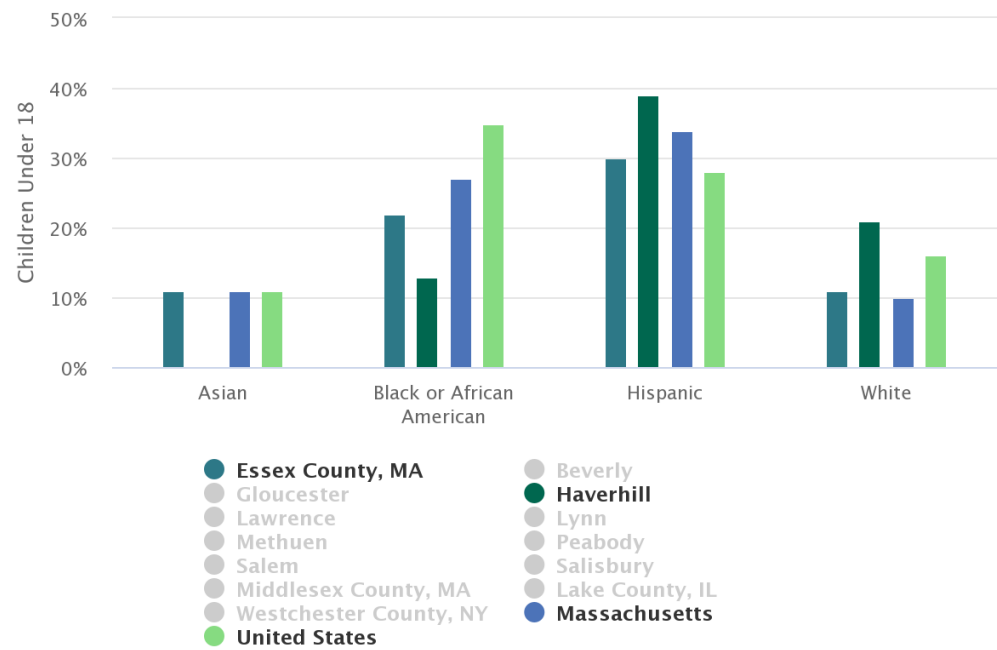
### Single-Parent Families by Gender, 2013-17



### Single-Parent Families by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-17

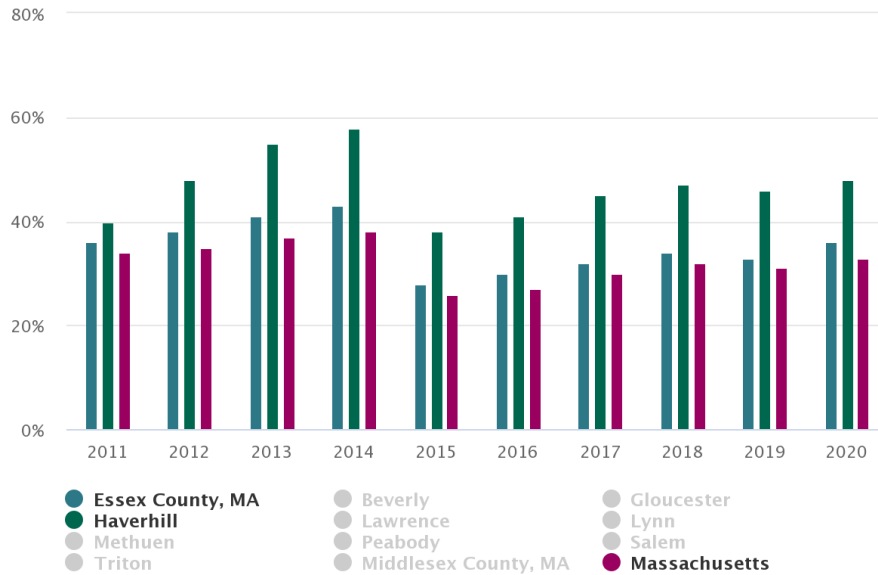


Children Living in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-18



In addition to the UMass Lowell facility, Haverhill serves as the main campus of Northern Essex Community College. Its public school system is rated well relative to other cities in the state, with 36.9% Hispanic enrollment. Graduation rate for low-income students is 66.8% with a dropout rate of 15%.

### Economically Disadvantaged Students



### High School Cohort Graduation Rate, by Student Group, 2019



## Percent of Students Passing Grade 10 Reading, 2019

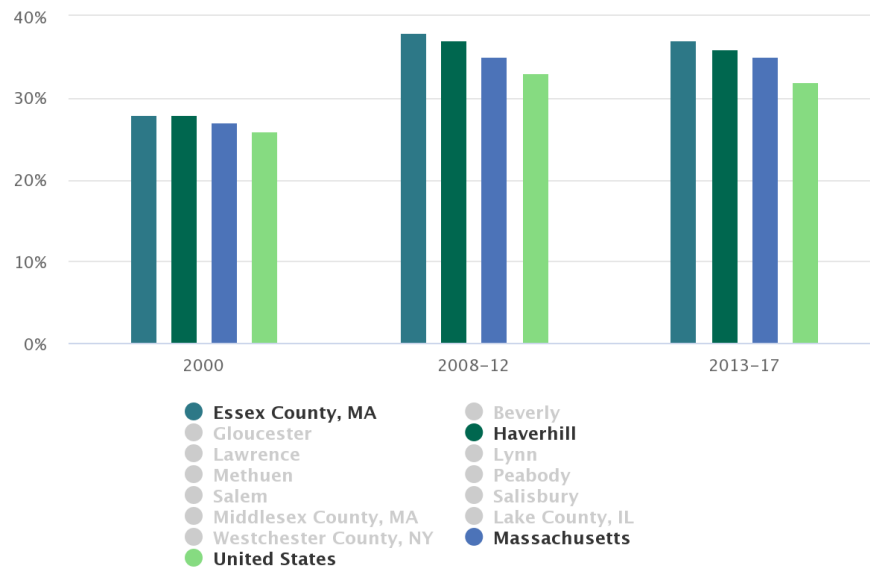


## Percent of Students Passing Grade 10 Math, 2019



Home ownership in Haverhill is low, around 60%. The median home value in Haverhill is \$272,300. This may seem affordable compared to the median home value in Essex County which is \$373,400; however, when the median household income is \$68,798, about \$10,000 lower than the state average, for white households and \$47,431 for Hispanic households, the math simply doesn't work. The housing affordability rate (median home value divided by median household income) is 4 to 1. A ratio of less than 2 to 3 is generally considered affordable. (ECCF, Impact Essex County). In CAI's service area, Haverhill residents have the lowest median income (see chart below).

### Rent as Percentage of Household Income



### Median Household Income

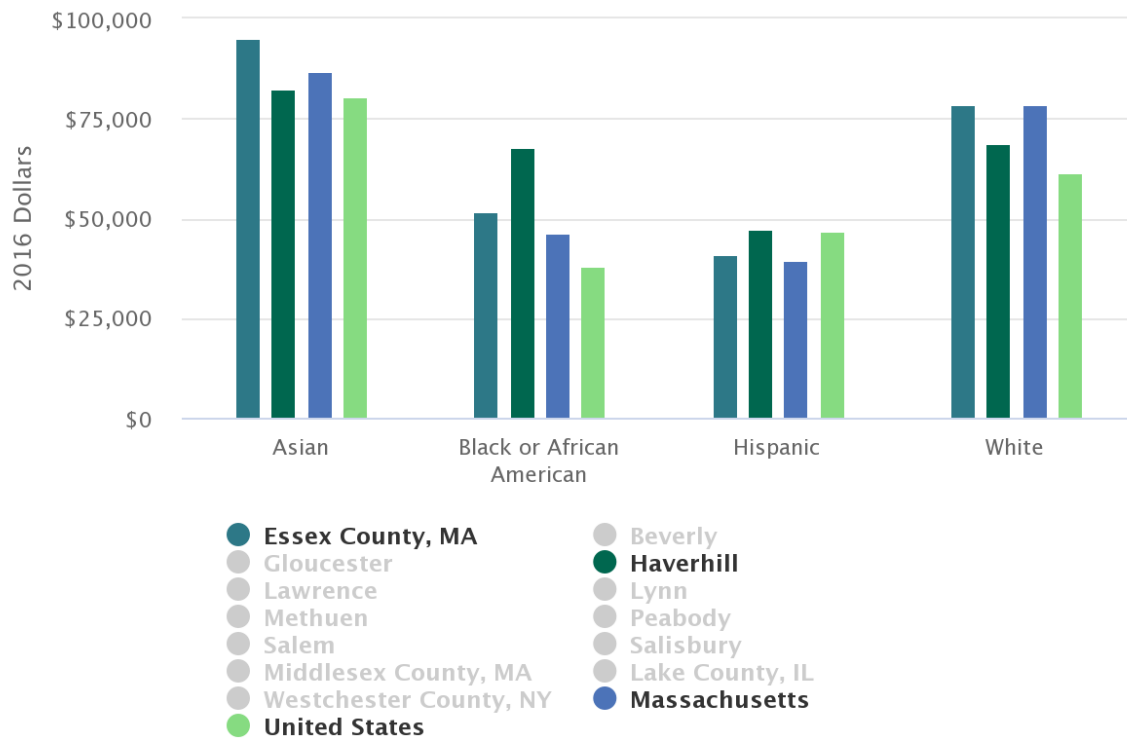
Town	Median Household Income
Amesbury	\$76,558
Boxford	\$140,268
Georgetown	\$107,683
Groveland	\$95,208
Haverhill	\$60,888
Merrimac	\$73,986
Newbury	\$91,168
Newburyport	\$85,556
Rowley	\$86,820
Salisbury	\$69,500

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Financial Characteristics)

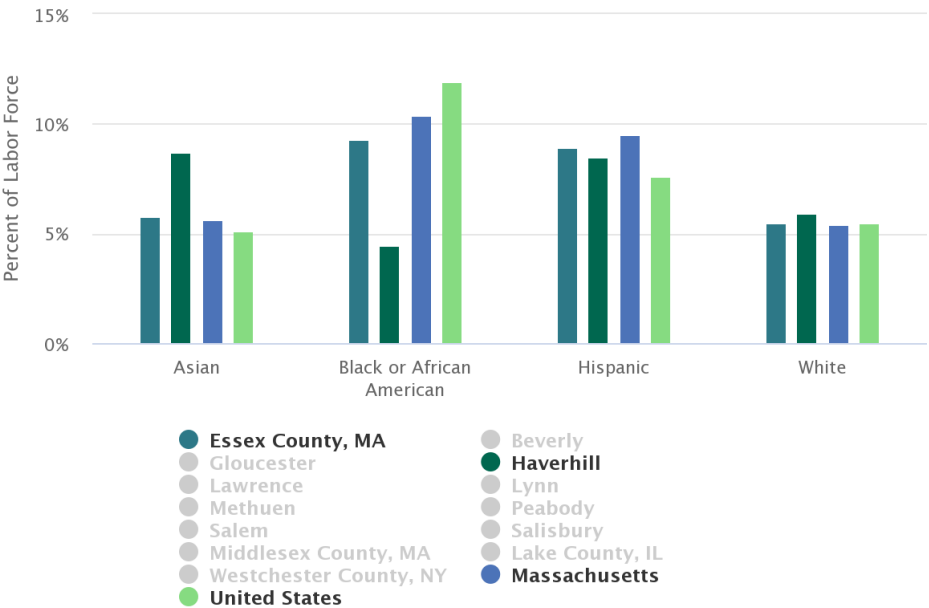
Haverhill's overall unemployment rate has skyrocketed in 2020 from 3% in February to close to 20% in June. (Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board). The unemployment rate is significantly higher in distressed neighborhoods, such as Mt. Washington. Those who have never taken part in the workforce are not counted in these statistics. Historical data from 2018 suggest that the Hispanic community had a higher unemployment rate to start (10.6% of the overall community). Restaurants and retail stores are closing in real time and the service jobs employ many Head Start parents and caregivers. One of the major sources of local employment was closed in May and is now in process of seeking a buyer.

On average, Hispanic families make \$20,000 less per year than white only families in Haverhill (\$47,431 compared to \$68,798), illustrating the disparity in economic opportunity in Haverhill. 29% of Hispanic residents in Haverhill are living in poverty, compared to 9% of Caucasian residents. Crime rate, primarily property, is relatively high in comparison to other cities in Massachusetts

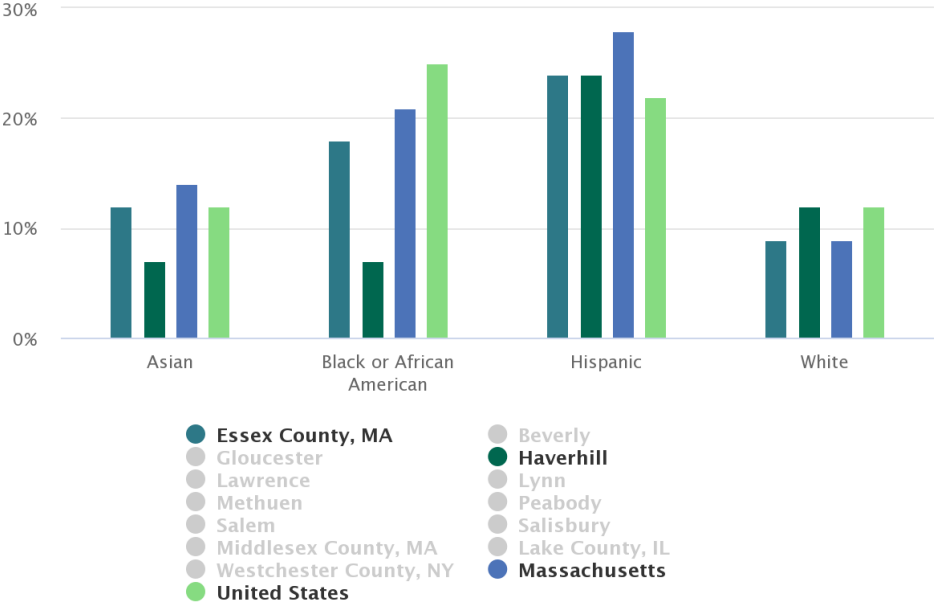
### Median Household Income, by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-17



Unemployment Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-17



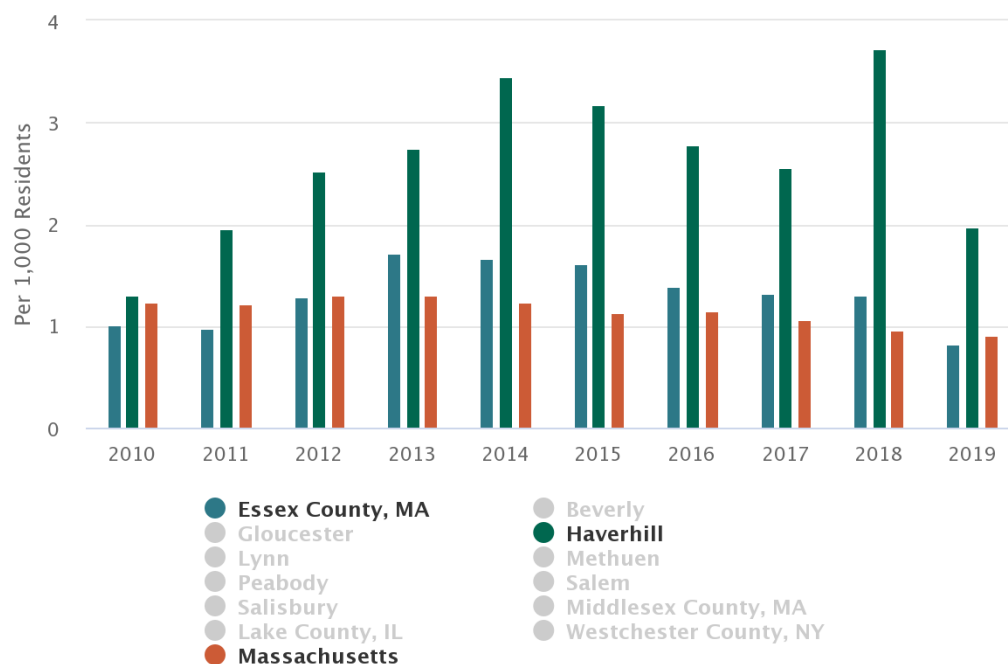
People Living in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity, 2013-17



In Essex County, over 600 people were arrested for drug-related crimes in 2019 - a rate of about 0.8 arrests per 1,000 residents. This is slightly lower than the statewide figure of 0.9. Salisbury and Salem (both at 2.3), Haverhill (2.0) and Methuen (1.8) had the highest rates in Essex County in 2019. The rate of arrests for drug-related crimes has been declining since the peak in 2007 of 2.0.

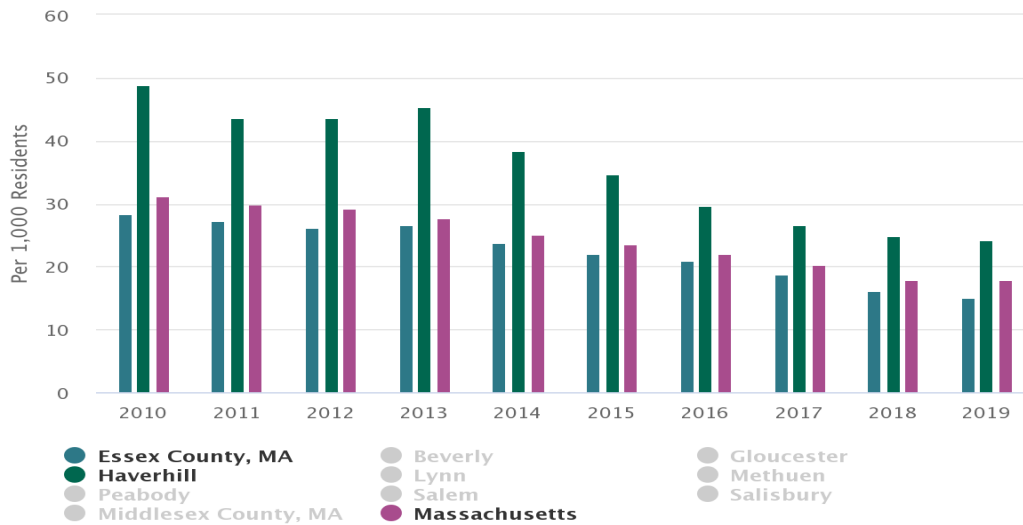
Haverhill has been battling Opioid addiction among its community members. Staff and volunteers at CAI's Drop-In Center work with guests dealing with addiction every day. CAI is part of a Drug Free Communities network in Haverhill, a cross-sectoral group developing strategies and seeking funding to help reduce drug-related deaths and overdoses. In 2018, 25 Haverhill residents died from a confirmed Opioid-related overdose. In 2019, 22 residents lost their life to addiction. (Massachusetts Department of Public Health). In February of 2020, Trinity Emergency Medical Service reported 41 Opioid overdose responses in Haverhill. The Covid crisis has overshadowed the Opioid crisis.

### Drug-Related Arrests

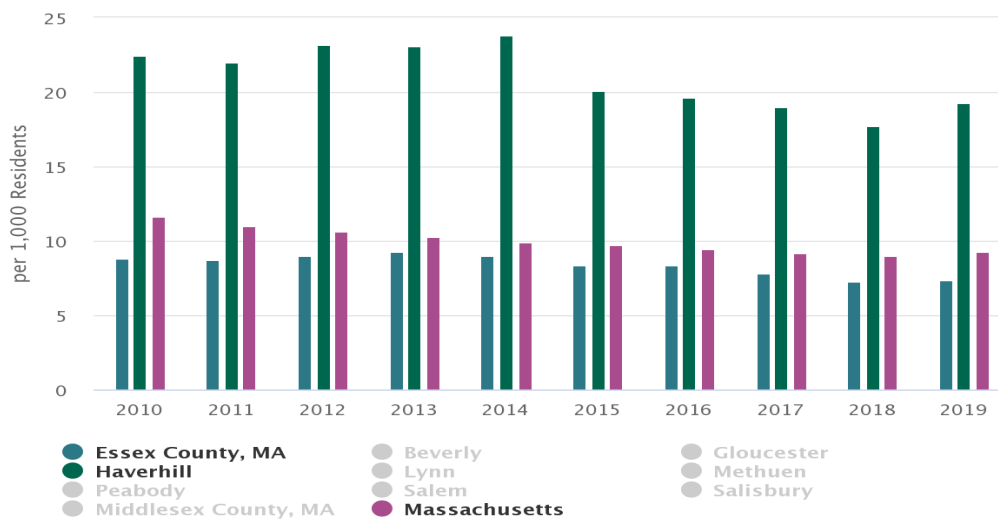


The rate of reported property crimes in Essex County in 2019 was 15 per 1,000 residents, just below the state rate of 17.9. The state and Essex County have each reduced their rates slightly from the previous year. There has been an overall reduction in Essex County's rate since 2008, when it peaked at 30. The highest property crime rates were in the cities of Salem (32.2), Haverhill and Saugus (at 24.3 and 25.4 respectively).

### Crimes Against Property



### Crimes Against People



The rate of reported crimes against people in Essex County was 7.4 per 1,000 residents in 2019, lower than the statewide rate of 9.3, and a slight increase in rate for both since 2018. Essex County's rate has fallen since 2013, when it was 9.3.

The cities of Haverhill and Salem (19.3 and 18.7 respectively) had the highest crime rates in the county, while a number of towns had very low rates.

## Haverhill Community Partnerships and Engagement

Many community groups in Haverhill are working together to strengthen families and address the needs of low-income residents. Community Action is part of an ecosystem of agencies, organizations, faith-based groups, municipal offices, healthcare groups, and educational centers who are serving low-income families and community members. CAI partners with many of the organizations to deliver services, programs, and referrals to those in need. One community need that is being addressed across the City is affordable housing and housing supports. CAI programming addresses housing issues through multiple programs. The Community Services program educates clients around tenant rights and distributes housing relief programming, including RAFT. CAI's LIHEAP program helps clients avoid energy shut-offs, access home heating oil at a reduced price and apply for energy discounts through its partnership with National Grid. CAI participates in the North Shore Continuum of Care and the Merrimack Valley Regional Consortium to End Homelessness.

Community Action, Inc.'s Drop-In Center (DIC) assists homeless and near homeless residents find safe housing and serves between 80 and 100 guests each day. Some who come to the DIC are recently housed, having experienced chronic homelessness or trauma in the past. The open-door environment and flexible services of the DIC, combined with a staff that recognizes early warning signs of recurrent problems, often provide the only community support services available and are key to these individuals' ability to maintain stable housing and live in the community. The DIC serves individuals who shelter at Mitch's Place, the only homeless shelter in CAI's region and a program of Emmaus. Mitch's Place, a 30-bed year-round emergency shelter for single men and women, closes in the morning. Many of these guests arrive at the DIC for a warm cup of coffee, food, medical assistance, referrals to community programs, companionship and, importantly, hope.

In addition, CAI works closely with Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association, a 200 unit, subsidized rental development with 20 one-, 140 two-, and 40 three-bedroom apartments in Haverhill. PGNA houses 348 residents. PGNA represents close to 50% of the site-based, subsidized family housing units in the City. In 1990, Community Action assisted the Tenants' Association in forming the non-profit corporation that purchased the property from the prior owner and preserved the property as an affordable housing neighborhood. CAI has continued to work with PGNA over the past 30 years to renovate units, build a playground, staff and support a food pantry, manage a supportive summer and afterschool program for youth, and refer tenants to community resources and opportunities. As of December 2020, there are 168 households on the waitlist for one-bedroom units, 120 households on the waitlist for two-bedroom units, and 84 households on the waitlist for three-bedroom units. With little turnover (generally 8 units per year), the waitlist is slow to move.

CAI works with the Haverhill Housing Authority which manages 434 housing units in Haverhill: 246 one bedroom, 66 two bedroom, 67 three-bedroom, and 5 four-bedroom units. HHA also manages 60 Section 8 vouchers in the City. The wait time for a one-bedroom unit is three years and for a multi-bedroom unit, the wait can be up to five years.

## Covid-19 Related Community Need in Haverhill

Haverhill has been particularly hard hit in 2020 by the Covid crisis. In February the unemployment rate was a low 3%. By the end of July, the unemployment rate had sky-rocketed to a jarring 20.5%. With high unemployment followed a massive increase in food insecurity. The largest food pantry in Haverhill, located at Sacred Hearts Parish, is seeing six times the number of families seeking food supports. The pantry served 1,300 families per week in December of 2020 and cannot keep up with the demand. The Commonwealth's food bank that supply much of the food and supplies are stretched thin. Further, the pantries rely on volunteers, many of whom are elderly and afraid of the community transmission, to distribute food. There are not enough people to serve.

Food insecurity is a community-wide issue in Haverhill. Haverhill Public Schools participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) providing meals to all students free of charge. CEP allows the highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost. Over 40% of Haverhill students are categorically eligible<sup>3</sup> for free or reduced lunch under the federal Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010. Community Action partners with the 14 organizations that manage food pantries and meal locations across the City. Food insecurity is an issue exacerbated for Hispanic residents. 16% of Haverhill residents were enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as of the last ACS (2012-2017). Hispanic families in Haverhill are enrolled at a much higher rate (37% compared to 12% of white families), showing further evidence of economic disparities.

Covid amplified the affordable housing crisis in Haverhill. During the eviction moratorium, the housing market tightened. People were afraid to move into a possibly contaminated apartment; landlords were reluctant to show units to prospective tenants; hardly anyone was evicted. People stayed put. Many of the tenants we spoke to tried to pay what they could – and we urged them to do so, -- even when their income was sharply reduced. Many landlords, despite struggling because of reduced income, were willing to work with tenants. But some situations had reached a breaking point by the time the moratorium ended in October. Already overloaded with requests for rental assistance, CAI's staff redoubled their efforts as the housing courts reopened. A number of sources of assistance for people with Covid-related financial problems were provided, with varying stipulations attached. CAI staff evaluated each household's needs to put them in touch with or to assist them with the appropriate sources of funding.

CAI works with Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) to provide intake for RAFT applicants in its catchment area (apart from those communities that are dealt with for RAFT by Lynn Housing and Neighborhood

<sup>3</sup> The cut-off is determined based on federal poverty level. Districts use means-tested programs such as number of families enrolled in SNAP or TANF to determine eligibility.

Development). As DHCD is well aware, applications have skyrocketed since the advent of Covid-19. RAFT assistance has been crucial for many people. Even though RAFT applications may now be started online, we have found that fielding questions, processing applications, and tracking down missing paperwork takes much of our staff's time – more than before. Far more than in the pre-Covid days, we find that much of the Community Services department's staff time is spent on the phone and answering email queries – work which never shows up in statistics. It required considerable staff time to remain apprised of changing unemployment regulations put in place at the beginning of the pandemic.

CAI received \$176,000 from CSBG CARES special funding to aid people affected by the pandemic. Much of this went to aid renters who had fallen behind; \$10,000 to provide food-related services. CASI is also working with the City of Haverhill to direct Haverhill residents affected by Covid to a program, implementing CDBG CARES, to pay their rent. We have been selected by the Essex County Community Foundation to distribute more than \$300,000 in Covid-related assistance. Annually, CAI distributes Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) funding, generally to renters. CARES funding doubled the amount of assistance we are able to offer this year, with a deadline of May 31, 2021, and staff is distributing that source, too.

Two Community Action sponsored programs, the Latinx Coalition and MakeIT Haverhill have proved critical in 2020. The Latino Coalition – Haverhill is a diverse group of Haverhill residents committed to connecting Latino community members to services, programming, information, and social capital. CAI worked closely with Coalition members to distribute Covid-relief funding, introduce the Coalition to regional funders and provide infrastructure, finance and governance supports, and a backbone community organization to the group.

MakeIT Haverhill is a partnership between CAI and Urban Kindness, a Haverhill neighborhood Group developing a collaborative makerspace for the Mt. Washington community and Haverhill. MIH seeks to “democratize” otherwise inaccessibly expensive tools of innovation, providing community spaces of high-tech and low-tech equipment, and a place where job seekers and entrepreneurs, regardless of socio-economic status or means, can share ideas, network, learn, and generate employment opportunities and commerce. MIH is located at 301 Washington St in Haverhill in a ~2000 SF commercial building. MIH volunteers offered ESOL classes and workshops, resume writing and employment search assistance throughout 2020.

## Amesbury

Amesbury, Massachusetts is a small city, with 13.7 square miles, located 41 miles north of Boston. Like Haverhill, Amesbury is located on the banks of the Merrimack River and its economy was rooted in shipbuilding, shipping and fishing. The Merrimack River supported a hat making and carriage building manufacturing industry during and after the Industrial Revolution. The City has 17,532 residents according to ACS. Similar to Haverhill, Amesbury has also experienced a significant change in the race/ethnicity of its population since 2010. The City has seen the following population changes: Black

increased by 104%, Asian increased by 99% and Hispanic increased by 47%. These increases happened with a population growth rate of only 7%. The City is approximately 92% white.

Amesbury has an aging population, experiencing a 23% decrease of children under five years of age and a 56% increase of residents over 65 in the past 10 years. Although overall per capita income was similar to Massachusetts median is \$78,314. (ACS 2013-17), 6.2% of Amesbury's residents live in poverty and 16% of the residents live near poverty<sup>4</sup>. Of those living in poverty, 66% households headed by a single female. Amesbury's unemployment rate skyrocketed during Covid. The Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance reported that Amesbury had a 7.8% unemployment rate in September of 2020.

In terms of client demographics that CAI has been able to track, Hispanics living in Amesbury are at a lower percentage than Haverhill. 40% Household income at below of FPL. 20% single parent families, 23% over age 65.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a nascent Brazilian population, which is not tracked by the usual demographics.

Community Action manages a client center located in downtown Amesbury, on a bus route and within walking distance of many rental housing units. The Center provides a wide variety of services to low-income individuals and families in the Amesbury-Newburyport area. These services include: the food pantry, which last year distributed 1,891 bags to 510 duplicated households; the clothing bank, which issued 1,180 bags of clothing; rent and utility assistance; referrals to heating assistance, including heating system replacement and weatherization; food stamp (SNAP) and MassHealth application assistance; WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) nutritional assistance and education.

Despite the pandemic, the Amesbury Center has stayed open. CAI staff is resolved to help and continues to offer services to community members in need. Like other food pantries, staff shifted to a curbside pickup model. For a time, the clothing bank was closed, but it is up and running again, with appropriate safety precautions. Through strong partnerships with local stores, CAI offers high-quality clothing, especially for children and women - all free of charge. This is a boon to struggling families with swiftly growing young children in a time when many households have drastically reduced income.

Many of CAI's clients are new to financial struggles. CAI's Amesbury Center Coordinator, Julie DeMarco LaPorta, has spent many hours guiding these newly struggling clients through the options and services available to them. With frequently changing requirements, she has remained informed of current regulations, so that she can aid her clients in staying self-sufficient.

## Newburyport

Newburyport, Massachusetts is a seaside town with 10.7 square miles, located 35 miles north of Boston. Like Amesbury, Newburyport is located on the banks of the Merrimack River and its economy was originally rooted in shipbuilding, shipping and fishing. The City has 18,289 residents according to ACS.

Similar to Haverhill and Amesbury, Newburyport has also experienced a significant change in the race/ethnicity of its population since 2010, experiencing the following population changes: Black residents increased by 229%, Asian residents increased by 155%, however the Hispanic population decreased by close to 49%. These increases happened with a population growth rate of only 4%. That said, Newburyport is approximately 94.1% white. Foreign-born residents account for 7.5% of the population.

Like Amesbury, Newburyport has an aging population, experiencing a decrease of 27% of children under five years of age and a 55% increase of residents over 65. 5.2% of the residents live in poverty and 15.3% of the residents live near poverty. Median household income is \$109,839 as of 2019 (pre-Covid, of course); mean household income is much higher, at \$145,502.

Over the last 60 years, Newburyport has changed from a blue-collar city to an upscale community with high property values. A large state park and access to Plum Island add to the city's attractiveness, but among the biggest drivers of change were probably the rehabilitation of the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century downtown, the development of an industrial park, and the restoration of MBTA service.

Housing costs are significantly higher than statewide levels: the median value of a household unit is \$548,400 – 43.7% higher than the statewide median. 35.7% of renters pay more than 35% of their income for rent. Seventy per cent of the 6,049 owner-occupied units have mortgages; 30% do not. The homeownership rate is 77.7%.

Newburyport is served by Community Action's Amesbury Center. CAI maintains a Head Start facility, as well. Community Action actively participates in two monthly gatherings of nonprofit agency representatives. CAI partners with faith-based groups, Mayor Holaday's office, the YWCA, several local charities, and the Salvation Army among others, to address the needs of families living in Newburyport.

## Merrimac

Merrimac, Massachusetts is a largely residential town situated on the Merrimack River with 8.8 square miles. Like the other towns that line the Merrimack River, Merrimac's economic roots are in manufacturing that is waterpower dependent, including farming, shipbuilding and carriage building, industries that no longer exist, or have experienced a sharp decline. Merrimac had 6,338 residents according to the 2010 Census. Merrimac has experienced the largest population growth of 9.2%, in the towns in CAI's region. Since 2010, it experienced a sharp decline in Black and Asian residents, but an

exponential increase in Latino residents with a 1,389% increase. Merrimac has an aging population and since 2010 has seen its over 65 population increase by 87% and its 5 to 9 year-olds decrease by 25%. The median household income in Merrimac of \$82,583 is slightly above the Essex County average. (ACS 2013-17). 5.7% of Merrimac residents live at or below the Federal Poverty Level and 14.6% of residents live in near poverty.

## Groveland

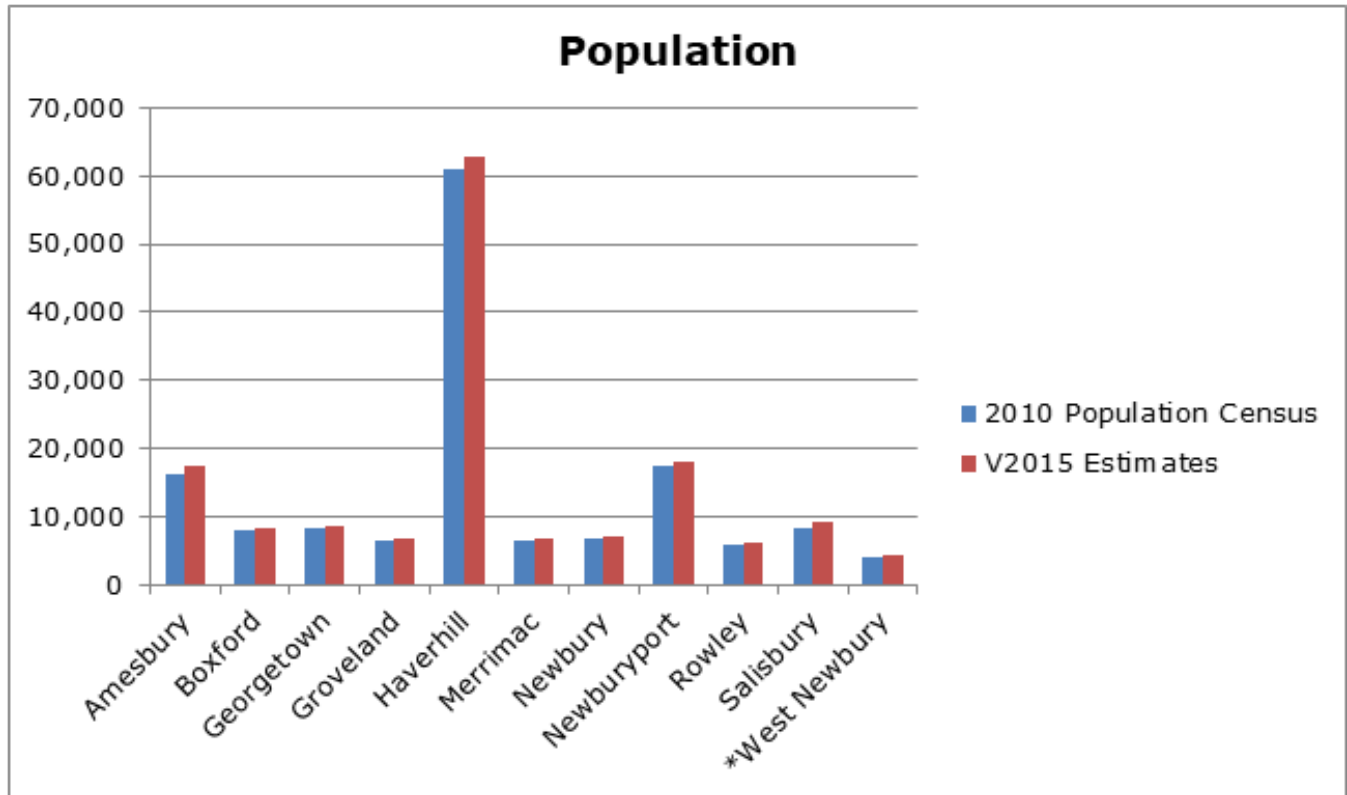
Groveland is a small, residential community much like Merrimac. Population growth is similar to Massachusetts at 6.2% (2010-2018) with a predominately white population (98%). CAI's internal demographics suggest that the clients served are a mix of single person, single parent female and traditional two parent households. Similarly, the population has been aging (65+% growth in ages 60-74). Housing is predominately owner-occupied (85%), much higher than the other towns in CAI's service area. Mortgage and rental costs are slightly higher than Massachusetts median (as of 2018) as well as the other communities. Employment rates were higher than surrounding areas. Median household income is higher than Massachusetts (\$97,109 vs. \$77,378) according to last reported data (2018).

## Other Towns in Community Action's Region

In addition to the five designated cities and towns in CAI's region, the Agency serves six other communities: Boxford, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury. They are all small communities with little or no industrial base. Salisbury, a town of 9,261 residents, is the community with the greatest need. 13.2% of Salisbury residents (and 18% of children) were living below the poverty level in 2017 (City-Data).

Salisbury is located on the Atlantic Ocean, with a large number of rental properties that are vacation homes in the summer and Section 8 housing in the winter. It is a transient community for many low-income families. Salisbury is part of the Triton School District, a regional district comprised of Rowley, Newbury and Salisbury. DESE reports that Triton serves 34.9% High Needs students and 22.1% Economically Disadvantaged students. Many extremely low-income families are doubled up, living at campgrounds or couch-surfing while they wait for beach cottages to open in the winter. Salisbury is seeing the largest population growth in the region.

The population in CAI's catchment area has remained steady. The smaller communities like Merrimac and Salisbury have seen growth.

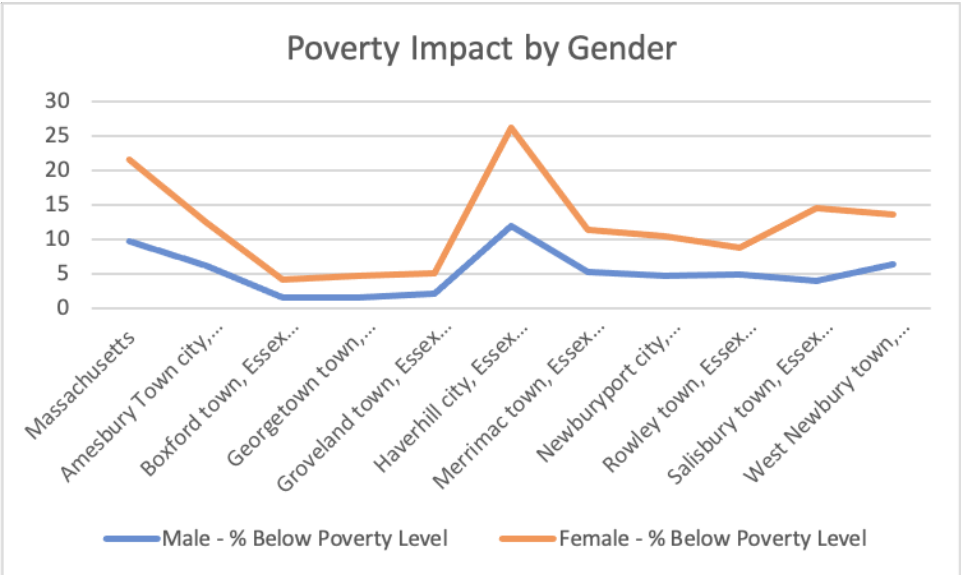


Population	2010 Population Census	V2015 Estimates	Percent Change
<b>Amesbury</b>	16,283	17,414	6.9%
<b>Boxford</b>	7,965	8,253	3.6%
<b>Georgetown</b>	8,183	8,584	4.9%
<b>Groveland</b>	6,459	6,750	4.5%
<b>Haverhill</b>	60,879	62,765	3.1%
<b>Merrimac</b>	6,338	6,800	7.3%
<b>Newbury</b>	6,666	6,971	4.6%
<b>Newburyport</b>	17,416	17,982	3.2%
<b>Rowley</b>	5,856	6,285	7.3%
<b>Salisbury</b>	8,283	9,261	11.8%
<b>*West Newbury</b>	4,149	4,370	5.3%

Source 1: United States Census Bureau Quick Facts population estimates. July 1, 2015 (V2015)

\*Source 2 (West Newbury) Federal Reserve Bank of Boston New England City Data - Source: U.S Census Bureau. 2000 Summary File 3, 2000 Census Summary File 1, 2010-14 American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates.  
[www.bostonfed.org/citydata](http://www.bostonfed.org/citydata)

Single-parent household, female-headed households have the highest poverty rate in CAI’s catchment area.



More details of poverty metrics are in Appendix D

## CAI's Response to Covid-19

The Covid-19 crisis was a call to action for Community Action's leadership team. Immediately, in March of 2020, the team met regularly and developed a strategy for communication and decision-making. Team members reviewed state and local guidance and drafted staff communications and community messaging. Program Directors from each department met with their staff to puzzle through how remote work could work. They developed strategies for remote service delivery and worked with their funding sources to bring best practices to CAI programs.

The safety of staff was of paramount importance. Knowing some programs needed to deliver in-person services, it was important that PPE, plexi-glass shields, air purifiers, air scrubbers, and signage were made available to staff.

CAI's IT department surveyed staff to determine technology needs. There was urgency with ordering and sourcing devices, and staff needed the tools and the training to use new technology, including Zoom, Google Meets and other online conferencing tools. These would prove invaluable as the crisis worsened.

CAI's Community Services team continued to offer rental assistance, helping out-of-work tenants and their landlords to stay financially afloat. With a wide range of knowledge about available sources of help, the team offers referrals and advice, as well as our own financial assistance.

In the first week of the pandemic, CAI received calls from local, regional and state funders asking how they can help. Funders looked to CAI as a partner and trusted organization to deploy Covid funding and supplies. The funding allowed staff to connect with families who were extremely vulnerable and isolated during this crisis. It helped staff maintain connections and relationships with our clients and families and connect with families who had never contacted CAI, new to financial difficulties, in need of help. CAI could not do this alone. Our long-standing partnerships with funders, municipalities, faith-based organizations, foundations, community groups, and agencies are critical to assisting community members. Funders like United Way, Essex County Community Foundation, Cummings Foundation, The Women's Fund and others rolled up their sleeves to partner with CAI to deliver programs, services and hope to those we serve.

United Way's team mobilized quickly, at the outset of the pandemic, to reach organizations like Community Action, and that agility proved critical. Over the years, UW has donated personal care products, cleaning products, diapers, financial literacy tools for staff, parents and children, games, trainings, and financial supports. Each of these donations had an enormous impact. Funding and supplies allowed staff to help a family or an individual in a different way, offering supports and deepening the trust between a family and our organization. The critical funds and diaper donations that United Way offered CAI is a shining example of the power of community, partnership, and teamwork. Staff and leadership at our Head Start, Early Head Start and Family Day Care programs worked together to deploy the much-needed diapers to our families quickly. Families faced with filling gaps, including food and diapers, with their children home full-time were relieved.

CAI also received direct client support funding from United Way and used the donation to purchase gift cards at Market Basket. This store was selected because of the number of stores in our region (three in Haverhill alone). The gift cards were mailed, along with a list of community resources and Covid guidance, to avoid having families leave their homes to pick them up -- mindful of government

recommendations regarding social distancing to protect both our staff and those families we serve. The mailing reminded families that they are not alone and can reach out to CAI for help in navigating the maze of Covid relief options.

United Way teamed up with CAI and other organizations to establish the One Haverhill Fund in April. Haverhill community leaders, including Representative Andy Vargas, Mayor James Fiorentini, Representative Christina Minicucci, the Greater Haverhill Chamber, Community Action, Inc., Emmaus, and Haverhill food pantries were connected. The team developed systems changes that created a more efficient food access and delivery model. The team mobilized resources for emergency assistance and expanded food distribution, with a focus on those who are most economically vulnerable during the pandemic. The One Haverhill Fund deploys resources through nonprofit partners to prevent financial crises and displacement for the residents of Haverhill. Importantly, it also has met every Thursday since it was launched. This core group of community leaders address and solve community problems efficiently, responsively and effectively. In the last week of November, 8,000 tons of food and supplies were donated to Haverhill and in one meeting, the team determined logistics, storage and distribution.

Essex County Community Foundation a long-standing partner of CAI, reached out to CAI leadership in early March. The Foundation received funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and from private, Covid-19 fundraising efforts and understood that community action agencies are effective organizations who are trusted in the communities they serve. ECCF looked to the five Essex County CAPs to deploy millions in direct client Covid-19 funding relief. The funding kept families afloat as they navigated unemployment, remote learning and health issues. The funding allowed CAI to serve 260 households that had never received services in the past. Over 76% of the clients were new to CAI, new to poverty and reached out in a time of crisis.

ECCF funding provided CAI's staff with additional touchpoints and ways to stay connected to the families and build relationships with new clients. Importantly, ECCF's support reminded us that we are not alone; we are not isolated; that CAI is part of system of anti-poverty supports that work together. This is critical in a time of crisis. From the outset of Covid, community partners, funders, leaders and volunteers all had their oars in the water, paddling in the same direction.

CAI has worked closely with the Latino Coalition in 2020 to address the needs of Latino residents. CAI is able to connect residents to Covid relief. Additionally, CAI has hired bi-lingual staff in its Community Services program and translates program documents into Spanish.

# Community Assessment

In order to better understand community needs, CAI engages in a community-wide assessment every three years to determine what services, programs, and deliverables are a priority for residents. In the second quarter of 2019, CAI's CARSP committee, which included staff and Board members came together to develop a Plan to Plan (see document attached) and draft a community assessment that was clear and understandable. The document was translated into Spanish to ensure we heard the voices of the Hispanic community. Both versions of the assessment were uploaded to Survey Monkey and links were sent to community partners across the region and paper copies were distributed to 19 community partners. Once returned, staff input the data into Survey Monkey.

The team began distributing the survey tool in August of 2019 in order to reach community members at community-wide events in CAI's region including National Night Out (Haverhill, Amesbury and Salisbury), youth sporting events, and parks. Looking back, the early start was key. It allowed CAI a solid seven months to seek input from community members, stakeholders and partners before Covid-19 struck.

From August of 2019 to February of 2020, CAI staff, Board members and administration distributed and collected 871 community surveys. The CARSP Committee rolled up their sleeves to cast a wide net of respondents. CAI's Amesbury Center Director delivered packages of surveys to six community partners in the Seacoast region, including: Our Neighbor's Table, Pettengill House, YWCA of Newburyport, Newburyport Community Services, Salvation Army, and the Amesbury Senior Center. Along with the surveys, the Director dropped off brightly colored collection boxes with instructions. It was an inviting process for Seacoast residents.

Board members dropped the surveys off at local libraries, senior centers, food pantries, elderly housing centers and churches. Board Chairperson, Lucinda Nolet invited residents at Buttonwoods in Haverhill, a supportive housing community for low-income adults 62 and older, to a focus group on September 3, 2019. This was important because the CARSP Committee was planning to wait until after the surveys were collected and the top needs identified before hosting focus groups. Eight Buttonwoods residents discussed community issues for two hours and identified food access and ability to pay bills as the top needs affecting their community. These were the same issues this group identified during the prior CARSP process.

Another key partner in distributing paper surveys was CAI's Energy Program. Program Director Mark Sanborn mailed a survey to every household that received LHEAP benefits in 2018. This yielded hundreds of completed surveys.

At the end of February 2020, CAI's CARSP Committee stopped collecting surveys. Of the 871 surveys collected, 65% (565) of the respondents were Haverhill residents. The top three community needs identified in the assessment were: affordable housing, employment, and ability to pay bills. Just

below ability to pay utility or heating bills was access to safe, affordable childcare (362 people identified this as a top community need). 41% of those surveyed stated that they are unable to pay their bills on time each month and 69% of the respondents replied they do not have \$500 set aside for an emergency. This precarious financial state was exacerbated by the Covid crisis.

Affordable housing is an urgent need in Haverhill. 71% of those surveyed in the Community Assessment placed affordable housing as the number one community need. The state-wide eviction moratorium was lifted on October 17, 2020, putting renters who are behind on their rent in danger of being evicted from their homes. Social services agencies are deploying relief through programs such as RAFT, EFSP, and Covid Relief funding, however they are limited to the amount of money that is available.

61% of the respondents to the 2020 Community Assessment were renters and 14% of the respondents were homeless or living with friends or family. 62% of those surveyed stated that they spend more than 50% of their monthly income on housing costs (rent, mortgage, taxes and utilities), making them housing cost burdened. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) reported that the North Shore region had the most families applying for emergency shelter housing in the Commonwealth in July and August of 2020. 87 families in July and 152 families in Essex County required emergency shelter placements in August 2020.

The second most pressing need in the community is employment opportunities. In the first quarter of 2020 when many of the surveys were completed, the unemployment rate was around 3% in CAI's service area. Still, with that low rate, many of CAI's clients and survey respondents were not making a living wage. Minimum wage will not support housing and basic needs for a family. The need for better employment opportunities was exacerbated by Covid. By June of 2020, the unemployment rate jumped to over 20%. Additionally, a large clothing manufacturer closed taking over 300 good-paying jobs. CAI's phones are ringing off the hook with Covid-related job loss needs. People are unable to pay rent and buy food causing a cavalcade of issues across the community.

The third issue that respondents stated is impacting our community is the ability to pay bills. Like housing and job loss, this issue has seen a multiplier effect in 2020. Our Community Services and Energy programs have seen not just an uptick in calls, but a large increase (72%) of new clients reaching out to CAI.

## Second Community Assessment

In April of 2020, Community Action drafted and deployed a Covid-19 Survey to better understand community needs. 378 community members completed the survey. 289 (77%) of the respondents reported that they were employed in February of 2020. In a stunning turn of events, only 149 (39%) of the respondents were employed in April of 2020, a dramatic decrease. 213 of those surveyed noted that they were concerned about paying bills. 86% of those surveyed had children at home.

## Third Community Assessment

In the fall of 2020, CAI deployed a second Covid-19 survey to see if community needs had changed. Only 145 respondents completed the survey. At the time, multiple agencies and organizations were distributing surveys and fatigue was setting in. It was clear that families were concerned about the health and safety of the schools in the region.

In September of 2020, all of the school districts in the region served by CAI announced that the school year would open with a fully remote or hybrid model due to Covid-19 concerns. This placed a tremendous burden on working parents to balance work, school, health concerns, and parenting. Many do not have access to the necessary tools, devices, broadband, and time to successfully take on educating their children. Many parents and caregivers were coping with financial stress, educational upheaval, health concerns, along with an uncertainty on when the State of Emergency will end.

CAI's Head Start and Early Head Start program experienced a decrease in enrollment because of Covid-19 concerns. Leadership listened to families who requested a remote option for students and developed a robust remote-learning option with 46 enrolled familie

## Key Findings: Community Assessment

### Top Needs Identified:

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Affordable Housing                   | 71% (573 respondents) |
| 2. Employment                           | 47% (379 respondents) |
| 3. Ability to pay utility bills         | 47% (375 respondents) |
| 4. Access to safe, affordable childcare | 45% (362 respondents) |

The survey tool asked respondents to check all of the answers that apply. They were not asked to rank the choices, only to identify.

The Covid-19 survey asked respondents to identify any difficulties they have experienced during the first month of the pandemic. The most pressing issues were as follows:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Difficulty purchasing hand sanitizer or cleaning supplies | 68% |
| 2. Difficulty purchasing food                                | 42% |
| 3. Reduced wages   | 26% |
| 4. Reduced work hours  | 26% |
| 5. Lost childcare  | 25% |
| 6. Lost job  | 21% |

## Key Findings: Internal Assessment

### Agency Strengths

#### Administrative Leadership Team

In 2020, CAI's leadership team faced a series of transitions, leadership changes, and the pandemic. The team, made up of CAI's Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Director, Human Resources Director, Fiscal Director, IT Director and Head Start Director, meets regularly and is accustomed to addressing agency issues, proposing solutions, and working collectively to solve problems and enact change. This would prove helpful in March.

In 2020, two long-standing members of this team retired, and two agency employees were selected, after a careful vetting process, to join the leadership team. This team continues to address agency-wide issues and reviews constantly changing Covid-19 guidance and communicates protocols to staff. This team addressed technology issues, PPE and Covid-related safety protocols and procedures and meets regularly to ensure the agency and its staff are safe and productive.

This team communicates regularly with the Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council and connects Agency governance to agency staff.

## Integrated Services Team

In 2018, under the leadership of John Cuneo and Greg Betley, CAI established the Integrated Services Team. The goal of the team is to improve the alignment of CAI's people and processes with support from the Case Management System (CMS), to improve clients' lives. The team meets two times per month to focus on identifying processes and procedures for families and individuals who have multiple needs and strengths. The team has become a strong network from referrals within CAI. The team is guided by CAI's mission to provide resources and opportunities for individuals, families and communities to overcome poverty.

At each meeting the team, made up of staff from each of CAI's programs, discuss cases that involve individuals and/or families who are served by multiple programs. The team strategizes around best practices that will assist clients in achieving their goals.

CAI invested in a Client Management System (CMS) in 2018 that provides a common data tool used agency wide. A staff member in CAI's Community Services department can input data that can be viewed by a staff member in CAI's Head Start program. This creates one intake process and one place for all staff members to look to in order to better understand the client's goals, strengths, services and needs. The initial intake worker will have the client sign a consent form that allows for data sharing. This system is critical and in 2020 proved instrumental for programs with a remote delivery model which is safer for staff and clients.

The team continues to meet virtually.

## Technology

Community Action was able to make an investment in technology in 2020 in order to safely serve clients using a remote delivery model. CAI's Director of Technology, John Tyler, was able to source and purchase 58 laptops, 198 chrome books and 5 iPads, and was able to provide staff with the tools they needed to communicate with clients. Further, CAI increased the internet and wireless speed, purchased and installed upgraded wireless hubs throughout CAI sites, and upgrades firewalls.

In addition to new devices, CAI switched over to Office 365. This cloud-based software makes remote work more efficient, allows for efficient collaboration in document editing, and has a meeting function. Zoom is another application that CAI invested in during the second quarter of 2020. This virtual meeting tool has been transformative, allowing staff to meet safely.

## Sound Fiscal and Humans Resources Management

CAI's fiscal team, led by Fiscal Director Charles Proctor and CAI's Human Resources department, led by HR Director Joy Smith both monitor state and local regulations, CAI policies and grant requirements to ensure CAI programs are complying with all required regulations. Both teams are monitored by multiple, required, annual audits that check systems, policies, procedures and practices. In 2020, the agency audits were disrupted due to Covid and, in spite of the issues presented, both Directors provided the necessary information to the auditors in a safe, efficient and timely manner.

## Agency Areas of Opportunity

### Capacity and Ability to Respond to Changes in Needs

In order to address the specific agency goals and objectives, as well as emergency/crisis events such as the Covid epidemic, CAI will seek to enhance capacity and capabilities to support the specific initiatives with a resilient cross-program approach to holistically meet client needs. This would build on the current Integrated Services initiative to provide a continuum of supporting services and would include:

- Review and upgrade Information Services to provide necessary support for case management, client outreach and relationships, partnerships, community awareness and fund raising.
- Expand existing development staff to support external outreach, partnerships and fund raising
- Improve staff onboarding, training and development to foster a consistent team approach to provide a full continuum of services and support to address client needs.

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

CAI has a strong relationship with the community it serves and generally reflects the community in terms of staff diversity. Nevertheless, recent events related to George Floyd's death; the subsequent review of policing practices and heightened racial unrest across the country; and disparity related to those most impacted by COVID, have highlighted the critical importance and value of DEI in our work. These issues, rooted in equity and social justice, have gripped our nation and served as a call for individuals, agencies and communities to reflect on current practices, seek additional insight, and develop a plan for what comes next to build a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for all. With this in mind, CAI is committed to actively integrating a DEI perspective and will work with staff, board, community members, and partners to ensure that equity is at the center of our work. We recognize that there are opportunities for learning, greater engagement with clients and staff, review of current practices and procedures with an equity lens, the identification of barriers, and a commitment to establishing pathways to improved equity for all. An agency-wide initiative to review available data and identify data gaps; identify barriers; review areas of opportunity; and establish pathways to improved equity would be critical elements to this effort.

### Linkages with other Community Action Agencies (CAAs)

#### **Empowerment Essex County**

Along with the other four Essex County Community Action Agencies, Action Inc. (Gloucester), Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (Lawrence), Lynn Economic Opportunity (Lynn), and North Shore Community Action Programs (Peabody), Community Action, Inc. developed Empowerment Essex County, an initiative that delivers a range of programs and services — county-wide — designed to alleviate poverty in Essex County.

All these agencies have previously provided some form of financial capability programming. Yet, all were faced in 2019 with a range of challenges in engaging individuals to enroll and attend programs such as Budget Buddies, Money Smart, Cooking Matters and First Time Home Buyer. Agencies also noted that some of these financial programs were so limited in scope that they had little impact on the lives of their clients. The solutions would also need to be complimentary to existing programs and services, able to be deployed alongside them. The solution needed to be scalable and replicable to have the widest reach. Data collection and analysis would allow us to understand the impact of the program.

The target population are low to moderate-income individuals participating in programs offered by the agencies. Not only are these individuals already engaged and benefitting from agency services, and therefore more likely to actively participate in the program, but the most successful financial capability programming is integrated into the provision of other economic stability of self-sufficiency programs.

Strengthening and improving service delivery across the agencies with the addition of high-quality financial empowerment programming will address an unmet need in a strategic and intentional way. CAAs represent a readymade network to deploy programs such as this across the county, where no similar infrastructure exists. As established providers whom clients trust and rely on, the agencies were eager to collaborate to deliver the best solutions for our clients and communities.

Faced with the challenges presented by the COVID pandemic, the five agencies have been able to pivot our model to leverage increased familiarity with and access to technology tools to reach a broader range of participants, promote better engagement, and manage the program as efficiently as possible.

### **Client Management System**

In 2018 Community Action, Inc. reached out to other CAA's when researching a new case management software system (CMS). CAI needed a long-term solution to data collection, outcome and measurement tracking, and client case management and care for the entire agency. This new system needed to include: a customized software suite for data collection; a process for comprehensive client intake; assessments to identify areas of focus for client services; and a mindset that every client who walks through the door is an agency client.

CAI leadership worked with other Massachusetts Community Action Agencies to discuss the common intake process and software options. Members of the CAI data team participated in communities of practice meetings around planning, data collection and common intake. Further, CAI staff attended multiple trainings around the updated CSBG reporting requirements. Community Teamwork's (CTI) planning team assisted CAI develop and design the CMS software suite. Team members met with CAI staff to demo the software and provide insight and information around design. Action, Inc. also selected the same CMS vendor. This cross-agency team continues to share best practices around usage and data collection.

The research, development, testing and implementation of this software system will be of great value to the entire Community Action Network. The goal of collecting accurate, unduplicated service counts and measurable outcomes is common to all agencies. This is a system that can be replicated—in fact, other agencies have expressed interest in our work on this project.

### **Covid-Relief Efforts**

The five Essex County Community Action Agencies are deploying Covid-relief funding to community members on behalf of private funders and the Essex County Community Foundation. Recognized as trusted community organizations, the CAA's were tapped at the outset of the pandemic to administer and distribute critical funding to individuals and families in need.

The CAAs collaborated to develop intake forms and systems that could efficiently, effectively and safely connect community members to much-needed funding during the crisis. The system needed to address diverse needs, language barriers, community fear and a remote environment. Fiscal teams, intake teams and data teams worked together to help individuals and families in crisis.

## **RAFT**

Community Action, Inc. works with CTI to connect community members to Rental Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT). CTI is funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to serve as the Administering Agency for the program. CAI has been designated by CTI to provide rapid re-housing assistance, including housing search, placement activities, and stabilization services to families.

Covid exacerbated regional affordable housing issues. It became clear early on in the crisis that CAI would need to increase staffing and work with CTI to ensure the system that would soon become overloaded with community members seeking help. CTI was able to access additional funding allowing sub-awardees (including CAI) to hire additional staff. CAI brought on two bilingual staff members to serve the influx of clients and support the provision of linguistically competent services, minimizing potential barriers to access.

# Board Authorization

## Community Action, Inc.

### **Strategic Plan Board Authorization June 23, 2021**

#### **June Board Meeting**

Prior to the June 23rd meeting of the Community Action, Inc. Board of Directors, each Director received a copy of the proposed Strategic Plan. Each Board member reviewed the Strategic Plan and at the June meeting, Board members had an opportunity to discuss, comment and ask questions about the document.

Pursuant to Organizational Standards 3.5 and 6.1, the Community Action, Inc. Board of Directors approved the 2021-23 Strategic Plan on June 23, 2021.

The Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Directors present, as documented in the Minutes of the meeting.

Attested:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lucinda A. Nolet". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lucinda Nolet, Board Chairperson

Date: June 23, 2021

# Strategic Goals

## Affordable Housing and Ability to Pay Bills

Affordable housing has topped the list of community needs in multiple, successive CAI community assessment cycles. CAI continues to respond to this critical need by improving programming, innovating, and partnering with community groups and organizations to better advocate for low-income community members and to develop programs and strategies to support the housing needs, which have worsened for many families during the pandemic.

During the last strategic plan, CAI and Action, Inc. formed the Essex County Financial Empowerment Coalition. This group, comprised of the five Essex County CAAs, worked with the Essex County Community Foundation and local banks to deliver a continuum of financial empowerment workshops and supports. Programs included: Budget Buddies, Money Smart, Cooking Matters, First Time Home Buyer and First Time Loan workshops. The programs and workshops help participants improve their confidence, economic stability and to develop budgets and household goals. Once the pandemic struck, the Coalition quickly pivoted and began offering workshops virtually. This allowed a family in Haverhill to participate in a course offered in Gloucester or Lynn. The program proved nimble and able to support more families in more cities and towns.

The success of the Coalition strengthened the partnership between ECCF and the CAAs, including CAI. Soon after the State of Emergency was declared, ECCF began disbursing private Covid-relief dollars and looked to the five Essex County CAAs to distribute funding to low-income residents affected by Covid. This critical financial support continues to assist individuals and families pay for rent, mortgages and other housing costs.

Strengthening and improving service delivery across the agencies with the addition of high-quality financial empowerment programming will address an unmet need in a strategic and intentional way. CAAs represent a readymade network to deploy programs such as this across the county, where no similar infrastructure exists. As established providers whom clients trust and rely on, the agencies were eager to collaborate to deliver the best solutions for our clients and communities.

By deploying a common model, we will be able to share data, issues, challenges and opportunities, in an effort to improve the program for participants. This will allow for a constant feedback cycle to inform the development of the program, but also agency priorities, and help us identify further opportunities for the agencies to collaborate to meet community needs.

## Agency Programs & Strengths

Program/ Service	Service Delivery System	Funding Strategies	Linkages
<b>Adult Education and Training</b>	As an indirect support for housing, the CAI Adult Education program offers HiSET Preparation classes, ESOL classes and English for Work classes. Participation in these courses helps individuals pass the HiSET exam and to perform better at work or, in college so that they can improve their economic standing. The Adult Education program also partners with local financial institutions to provide general financial literacy classes/workshops for students.	DESE	Financial Institutions, Northern Essex Community College, local businesses, volunteers and other local service agencies.
<b>First Time Homebuyer Education Program</b>	CHAPA and Mass Housing Certified 3-Day evening workshops offered every other month at the Presidential Gardens Community Center (an affordable housing development). CAI's Deputy Director of Asset Development also works with qualified individuals to obtain down payment assistance through private and government funded resources.	Local and regional banks. Private funders	Internal referrals, municipalities who offer affordable housing lotteries, down-payment assistance programs and lending institutions.
<b>Emergency Housing Assistance</b>	CAI's CSBG-funded Community Services program staff, in Haverhill and Amesbury manage the disbursement of EFSP, RAFT and discretionary funds to eligible low-income individuals and households to prevent eviction; provide educational resources and information concerning landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities and housing opportunities.	CSBG, RAFT, EFSP, private foundations and community donations.	Referrals of low-income clients to external agencies and resources such as: local housing authorities, landlords, and sources of governmental and private assistance and support; referrals to other services that may be able to help with issues contributing to difficulties with affording housing.
<b>Covid-Relief</b>	CAI is administering multiple Covid-relief programs. The Community Services Department disburses checks directly to individuals who are able to demonstrate a financial hardship that was caused because of Covid.	ECCF	Multiple organizations, faith-based groups, municipalities, and agency programs.

<b>Program/ Service</b>	<b>Service Delivery System</b>	<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<b>Linkages</b>
<b>CARES ACT</b>	CAI staff teamed up with the City of Haverhill to support housing and housing-related needs of community members.	CDBG, City of Haverhill	Residents of Haverhill.
<b>LIHEAP HEARTWAP</b>	CAI's Energy Program staff administer the LIHEAP and HEARTWAP programs for low-income residents. CAI also participates in an Oil Co-op program that allows clients to purchase oil at a discounted price.	LIHEAP, HEARTWAP, National Grid, private foundations, service groups and private donations.	Elder services, Mass Save, housing authorities, internal referrals, Oil Co-op, National Grid, municipalities and outside agencies.
<b>Budget Buddies</b>	Budget Buddies encourages and develops financial literacy know-how, personal confidence, and an action plan for low-income women. Women participants are paired with a trained financial mentor ("Buddy") and over the course of the six-month, safe and structured workshop, they build a trusting relationship.	ECCF, private funders	Community partners, Essex County CAAs
<b>Financial Literacy and Coaching Model</b>	The program encompasses basic financial literacy, and more intensive financial coaching. The program will leverage a standard financial literacy program (for example the FDIC's Money Smart Program) and one-to-one financial coaching provided by agency staff trained and certified in United Way's Core Financial Coaching Standards.	ECCF, private funders	We will partner with banking partners to deliver a basic financial literacy program, ideally based on the principals of the FDIC's Money Smart curriculum.

Program/ Service	Service Delivery System	Funding Strategies	Linkages
<b>Cooking Matters</b>	Food skills education--practical education for individuals to purchase and prepare foods that meet their nutrition, budget, and personal needs--can be a lifeline for families struggling with hunger.	ECCF, private funders	Cooking Matters, Head Start, WIC, community partners.
<b>Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association</b>	Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association (PGNA), a 200 unit, subsidized rental development with 20 one-, 140 two-, and 40 three-bedroom apartments in Haverhill. PGNA houses 348 residents represents close to 50% of the site-based, subsidized family housing units in the city. In 1990, Community Action assisted the Tenants' Association in forming the non-profit corporation that purchased the property from the prior owner and preserved the property as an affordable housing neighborhood. CAI has continued to work with PGNA over the past 30 years to renovate units, build a playground, staff and support a food pantry, manage a supportive summer and afterschool program for youth, and refer tenants to community resources and opportunities.	State subsidies	DHCD, Haverhill Housing Authority, PGNA Board

## Educational Opportunities and Pathways to Employment

CAI seeks to better understand and address the specific employment and training needs of low-income individuals and expand access to job training, HiSET courses, ESL courses, and employment opportunities in the region.

CAI's Adult Education Program offers HiSET classes that prepare students for the high school equivalency exam. The program also offers a comprehensive ESL program that works to improve students written and spoken command of the English language. Other supports include a career advisor and a program advisor who can help students access multiple agency services, or refer the student to other organizations. The goal is to remove barriers, provide supports, and help the student succeed.

CAI partners with Make-It Haverhill a place-based program located in the Mt. Washington neighborhood of Haverhill that provides high-tech and low-tech equipment, and a place where job seekers and entrepreneurs regardless of socio-economic status or means, can share ideas, network, learn, and generate employment opportunities. MIH manages job fairs, provides employment supports, hosts workshops and classes aimed at raising self-confidence, improving English language skills and supporting low-income community members seeking employment.

CAI partners with Northern Essex Community College to offer free college classes that will prepare students for a career in the early learning field. Courses include: Child Growth and Development; Child Abuse and Neglect and others. The program connects students with educators, mentors, financial aid staff and college advisors. The program helps student prepare for the CDA certificate. Technology assistance and computer skills training is offered. The programs are offered virtually which removes multiple barriers for students including transportation and childcare. They are also offered at night, which for many, allows students to work during the day.

### Agency Programs & Strengths

Program/ Service	Service Delivery System	Funding Strategies	Linkages
HiSET	CAI Adult Education program offers HiSET Preparation classes, Participation in these courses helps individuals pass the HiSET exam and to perform better at work or, in college so that they can improve their economic standing. The Adult Education program also partners with local financial institutions to provide general financial literacy classes/workshops for students as well as referrals to MassHire for employment assistance.	DESE	MassHire, financial institutions, Northern Essex Community College, local businesses, volunteers and other local service agencies
ESL	CAI Adult Education program offers formal	DESE	MakeIt Haverhill

<b>Program/Service</b>	<b>Service Delivery System</b>	<b>Funding Strategies</b>	<b>Linkages</b>
	ESOL classes.		Latino Coalition
<b>MakeIT Haverhill</b>	MIH manages job fairs, provides employment supports, hosts workshops and classes aimed at raising self-confidence, improving English language skills, basic computer skills and supporting low-income community members seeking employment.	Private funders, CDBG	MassHire, local government, Chamber of Commerce, Northern Essex Community College, local businesses, volunteers and other local service agencies
<b>Head Start/ Northern Essex Community College Partnership</b>	Teacher training program offers free college classes at NECC that prepares students for a career in the early education field.	Cummings Grant, State Funding	NECC, local and regional early learning providers, Early Learning Leadership Team

## Safe, Affordable Childcare and Preschool

CAI seeks to better understand and address the specific childcare and preschool needs of low-income families. As a result, CAI supports expanded access to early learning services within our service area in order to ensure that families have access to high quality childcare that allows them to pursue education and employment opportunities and to increase the rate of kindergarten preparedness of children from low-income families in our local cities and towns.

CAI provides a variety of early learning services to low-income families through our Head Start, Early Head Start, Family Day Care, and Family & Community Connection programs. Service gaps exist due to high demand and subsequent waitlists for Head Start and other local preschool services, as well as the clear need for longer class times for children of parents who work or go to school. Transportation and a shortage of licensed Family Child Care Educators have also been identified as gaps to access early learning services in our communities.

CAI partners with local and regional early learning providers and organizations who make up Haverhill's Early Learning Team (ELT). The ELT meets twice per month to develop programs, apply for funding, share best practices, and update team members about initiatives and opportunities that will connect families to early learning programs and supports. The ELT hosts an Early Learning Fair each February (in 2021 it was a virtual, week-long event). The team develops training and professional development opportunities City-wide to ensure educators have access to critical trainings that are offered in response to surveys and need. The team was awarded multiple grants to develop a summer program to prepare students for the 2021-22 school year.

## Agency Programs & Strengths

Program/ Service	Service Delivery System	Funding Strategies	Linkages
<b>Family Day Care (FDC)</b>	The Family Day Care program (FDC) provides comprehensive Family Child Care services for children 8 weeks to 12 years old in licensed and monitored Family Child Care homes.	Department of Early Education	Internal and external referrals, Family Child Care Educators and parents.
<b>Family &amp; Community Connection (FCC)</b>	Family and Community Connections (FCC) offers support, parent education and Early Learning opportunities for families with children 0 to 8 years old. Opportunities include playgroups, Kindergarten Ready, STEM programs, story times, music and more.	Department of Early Education	Internal and external referrals, FCC Advisory Council, public/private preschools, public libraries, parents and Thom Early Intervention.
<b>Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS)</b>	Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) provide comprehensive services for children ages 0-5 with slots for 330 infants, toddlers, pregnant mothers, fathers and preschoolers. Services include center based part and full day classes, homebased services, family advocacy, transportation, healthy meals and snacks and more.	Administration for Children and Families	Internal and external referrals, USDA, parents, Head Start Policy Council, Early Learning Leadership team, FCC Advisory Council, NECC, area public schools and volunteers.

## Access to Food Resources and Nutrition Supports

CAI seeks to support food access and nutrition needs of low-income families, cognizant of the fact that low-income families often struggle with food insecurity and can be forced to make difficult decisions when their income cannot adequately address basic household and food expenses. CAI is committed to providing food and nutrition supports that not only address access to food but connect eligible individuals and families with state nutrition benefits that alleviate some of the pressure on the household budget. As a result, CAI works to increase community awareness of available resources, provide internal and external referrals, and offer additional support navigating applications and benefit redemption practices for state food and nutrition programs.

A variety of CAI services address the food and nutrition needs of low-income individuals and families in our community, including WIC, food pantry distribution through PGNA and the Amesbury Center, meals through the Drop-In Center and meals provided to children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, and Family Day Care programming.

In March of 2020, CAI leadership was instrumental in the formation of the One Haverhill Fund, a group that includes State Representatives, City leaders, United Way, non-profit leadership and food pantry directors. The group, supported by United Way, has raised tens of thousands of dollars to support critical needs. The team quickly identified food insecurity, food shortages and lack of access to adequate food resources early on in the pandemic. The group continues to meet weekly and has developed a network of partners who are addressing food insecurity in Haverhill and the surrounding towns.

### Agency Programs & Strengths

Program/Service	Service Delivery System	Funding Strategies	Linkages
WIC	The Northern Essex Women, Infants and Children program provides healthy food, health and nutrition education, referrals for community supports and other services to eligible pregnant women and families.	USDA, Health and Human Services (HHS) / Department of Public Health (DPH)	Internal and external referrals, USDA, Head Start Policy Council, local Early Intervention programs in Northern Essex WIC catchment area, local colleges and universities, Anna Jacques Hospital, local pediatricians and OB/GYN's in WIC catchment area, local farmers
PGNA - Food Pantry	Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association (PGNA), a 200 unit, subsidized rental development with 20 one-, 140 two-, and 40 three-bedroom apartments in Haverhill, also provides food support through an on-site food pantry and referral to community resources	State subsidies	Merrimack Valley Food Bank  Sacred Heart Food Pantry  St. Vincent de Paul  Fantini Bakery
Amesbury Center Food Pantry	The Amesbury Center works with clients to 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.	CSBG, private funders	Pettengill House, Our Neighbors' Table, Howard Benevolent Society, Community Services of Newburyport, Salvation Army of Newburyport, St. Vincent, Amesbury Housing Authority

Program/Service	Service Delivery System	Funding Strategies	Linkages
<b>Drop-In Center – Meals</b>	The Drop-In Center serves as Haverhill's only drop-in day program for the area's homeless and indigent individuals. It is a safe haven offering a daily meal to those in need most weekdays.	CSBG, City of Haverhill, Private Funders	City of Haverhill, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lowell Food Bank, Project Bread, community volunteers
<b>Cooking Matters</b>	Food skills education--practical education for individuals to purchase and prepare foods that meet their nutrition, budget, and personal needs--can be a lifeline for families struggling with hunger.	ECCF, Private Funders	Cooking Matters, Head Start, WIC, community partners.
<b>Family Day Care (FDC)</b>	The Family Day Care program (FDC) provides comprehensive Family Child Care services for children 8 weeks to 12 years old in licensed and monitored Family Child Care homes. Food and nutrition supports include the provision of meals and snacks while on site and internal and external referrals for additional food benefits and supports.	Department of Early Education	Internal and external referrals, Family Child Care Educators, parents, USDA, Early Learning team, FCC Advisory Council, regional public schools and Thom Early Intervention.
<b>Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS)</b>	Head Start and Early Head Start (HS/EHS) provide comprehensive services for children ages 0-5 and their families, and pregnant women. Food and nutrition supports include the provision of meals and snacks while on site and internal and external referrals for additional food benefits and supports.	Administration for Children and Families	Internal and external referrals, USDA, parents, Head Start Policy Council, Early Learning Leadership team, FCC Advisory Council, NECC, regional public schools, Thom Early Intervention, and volunteers.

# Specific Objectives & Plan Monitoring and Reporting

## Summary of Agency Goals

### Affordable Housing Goal

During FY2021-23, 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 will offer classes and workshops around budgeting and financial literacy to improve the financial standing of low-income individuals, families, and communities.

- Specific Objective # 1  
Increase the Number of Low-income Clients that Receive Financial Literacy Education

During FY2021-23, CAI will develop a portfolio of financial literacy tools and services for low-income individuals to improve their economic standing in the community. This will include formal adult education offerings, programs for budgeting and application for financial services, trained staff on financial literacy as well as offerings through partnerships with other agencies and business within Essex County. CAI will continue to support low-income individuals or households that complete the First Time Homebuyer Education Course and receive a CHAPA and MassHousing approved certificate.

- Specific Objective #2  
Better Identify Housing Needs of Low-income Clients & Increase the Number of Clients Receiving Direct Supports and Internal/External Referrals

During FY2021-23, CAI will train and educate staff about internal and external housing resources, interventions and opportunities in the community allowing each program to better assist and increase the percentage of low-income residents receiving direct housing supports, including but not limited to: weatherization, improved energy efficiency and eviction avoidance.

- Specific Objective #3  
Increase the Available Affordable Housing Resources at Presidential Gardens

During FY2021-23, CAI will work with engineers, funders and municipal leaders to explore the option of adding additional units and expanded housing opportunities and resources at the Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association (PGNA), a 200 unit, subsidized rental development with 20 one-, 140 two-, and 40 three-bedroom apartments in Haverhill. PGNA houses 348 residents that represents close to 50% of the site-based, subsidized family housing units in the city. In 1990, Community Action assisted the Tenants' Association in forming the non-profit corporation that purchased the property from the prior owner and preserved the property as an affordable housing neighborhood. CAI has continued to work with PGNA over the past 30 years to renovate units, build a playground, staff and support a food pantry, manage a supportive summer and afterschool program for youth, and refer tenants to community resources and opportunities. As of December 2020, there are 168 households on the waitlist for one-bedroom units, 120 households on the waitlist for two-bedroom units, and 84 households on the waitlist for three-bedroom units.

## Employment Goal

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.

- Specific Objective #4  
Improve Employment Opportunities and Retention for Low-Income Clients

During FY2021-23, CAI will leverage both the formal Adult Education program and MakeIT Haverhill partnership to build a network of support services that will assist clients in improving marketable skills, digital literacy, and resume and interview techniques. This would include training staff and volunteers to provide coaching and mentoring as well as outreach to external funders (city, banks, business partners) for specific services and referrals across CAI's service area.

## Food Goal

During FY2021-23, 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. Improved prescreening and case management will help staff identify clients in need of food supports and ensure that clients are connected quickly with programs for which they are eligible. Increasing access to, and utilization of, food programming will reduce hunger and food insecurity in our community, and those who qualify for state nutrition assistance programs will be able to use the nutrition support benefits to improve access to nutritious food and achieve greater financial stability.

- Specific Objective #5  
Better Identify the Food Needs of Low-income Clients and Increase Direct Food Supports, Food Referrals and Nutrition Education

During FY2021-23, CAI will provide training to staff on how to evaluate the food needs of clients, identify appropriate internal and external food and nutrition resources, as well as complete referrals to these food resources to best assist clients to meet their food needs. Ensuring that staff are adept at addressing the critical issue of food insecurity will increase the number of income eligible residents receiving and using direct food supports, nutrition education and referrals to food assistance programs, including but not limited to: SNAP benefits, WIC benefits, food pantries, farmers' markets, summer meal sites, and local meals. Additional program offerings, such as community gardens, that can build partnerships and add coordinated services to improve families' circumstances will also be explored.

- Specific Objective #6  
Increase enrollment in, and utilization of, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits of eligible clients

During FY2021-23, WIC, Head Start / Early Head Start and Family Day Care staff will educate clients about SNAP guidelines and benefits, as well as provide referrals for application assistance and/or provide direct support applying for and enrolling in SNAP. Staff will encourage SNAP participants to consistently redeem their full food benefits package.

Head Start / Early Head Start and Family Day Care staff, in particular, will work to increase education about, enrollment in and utilization of the WIC program using the practices listed above, along with the use of internal referrals and warm handoffs, whenever appropriate. Staff from WIC, HS / EHS and Family Day Care programs will educate and support families to maximize redemption practices. WIC staff will work with WIC program participants to support participants with low redemption rates.

## Early Education and Child Care Goal

During FY 2021-23, CAI seeks to expand access to quality early learning opportunities within our service area. Expanding the availability of early childhood services will increase the rate of kindergarten preparedness of children from low-income families in our local cities and towns; and improve the ability of families with children birth to 5 to achieve financial independence, by providing high-quality childcare opportunities that enable caregivers to pursue educational and employment activities.

- Specific Objective #7 – Early Childhood Education

Increase access to and utilization of high-quality early childhood opportunities for low-income families

During FY 2021-2023, CAI will increase access to high quality early childhood opportunities by identifying qualified staff to provide early childhood services. Also, CAI early learning programs will participate in outreach strategies that focus on improving program visibility, building community awareness of the availability and benefits of CAI early learning programs; fostering a greater understanding of the program with internal and external partners to allow for consistent referrals and warm hand-offs; and providing regular communication with the public, staff and partners. Additionally, CAI will enhance the provision of developmental services for low-income birth to 5 and comprehensive family supports for their families, by providing strong relationship-based experiences at childcare facilities, Family Child Care homes and through homebased programming.

- Specific Objective #8 – Staff Development and Retention

Increase the number of new early learning educators in the community and provide professional development supports that improve staff retention and workforce development of current educators.

During FY 2021-23, CAI Early Head Start / Head Start and Family Day Care programs will refine staff recruitment, onboarding and retention strategies to ensure that staffing numbers allow for the full enrollment of early childhood slots. CAI will collaborate with community partners to conduct outreach to and recruitment of individuals interested in pursuing a career in the field of early education. In addition to these efforts to educate the community about early education opportunities, CAI Early Learning Services leadership will review onboarding and professional development practices, identify challenges related to recruitment, professional development and retention, and prioritize opportunities for action.

## Board Updates and Reports on Specific Agency Goals and Objectives

The CAI Board of Directors meets 10 times per year. Pursuant to organizational standards 4.4 and 6.5, twice per year, the Board is updated on the outcomes and strategies of the CARSP by the Director of Planning. The Board is able to understand the updates and outcomes because they were directly involved in developing the strategies and goals of the CARSP.

## Specific Objectives:

### Specific Objective #1: Increase the Number of Low-income Clients that have Access to Financial Literacy Education

#### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, CAI will expand the portfolio of financial literacy tools and services for low-income individuals to improve their economic standing in the community. This will include formal adult education offerings, programs for budgeting and application for financial services, staff training on financial literacy as well as offerings through partnerships with other agencies and business within Essex County. CAI will continue to support low-income individuals or households that complete the First Time Homebuyer Education Course and receive a CHAPA and MassHousing approved certificate.

#### Short-Term Annual Goals

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>Develop Baseline &amp; Tracking</b> identify and track low-income participants in financial literacy offerings using case management software.	CMS reports on referrals to financial literacy offerings, including coordinated offerings with a coalition of 5 peer agencies in the Essex County Financial Literacy Coalition  CMS reports on number of low-income participants who were enrolled and number who completed financial literacy offerings  Review and analyze available data regarding change in financial wellness of those who completed financial literacy service through CAI

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2022</b>	<p><b>Outreach</b> Expand outreach and awareness of the Financial Literacy program to low-income individuals in the CAI Service area.</p> <p>Collect and analyze community data.</p>	<p>Program Directors will develop an outreach plan of the financial literacy program to low-income households with a coordinated team of agency trained staff and partnerships.</p> <p>Program Directors report on quarterly outreach efforts</p> <p>CMS reports on referrals to financial literacy offerings, including coordinated offerings with a coalition of 5 peer agencies in the Essex County Financial Literacy Coalition</p> <p>CMS reports on number of low-income participants who were enrolled and number who completed financial literacy offerings</p> <p>Review and analyze available data regarding change in financial wellness of those who completed financial literacy service through CAI</p>
<b>FY 2023</b>	<p><b>Expansion</b> CAI will expand the Financial Literacy program to reach more low-income individuals.</p> <p>Collect and analyze community data.</p>	<p>Program Directors will update outreach plan</p> <p>Program Directors report on quarterly outreach efforts</p> <p>Program Directors report on quarterly</p> <p>CMS reports on referrals to financial literacy offerings, including coordinated offerings with a coalition of 5 peer agencies in the Essex County Financial Literacy Coalition</p> <p>CMS reports on number of low-income participants who were enrolled and number who completed financial literacy offerings</p> <p>Review and analyze available data regarding change in financial wellness of those who completed financial literacy service through CAI</p> <p>Planning staff will work with the Program Director for Financial Literacy to expand offerings of the program to low-income households.</p>

## CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

**CSBG Goal: Individuals and Families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.**

**Domain(s): Income and Asset Building**

### **NPI Income & Housing Indicators**

- The number of low-income individuals or households that completed the FTHB program and received a CHAPA certificate.
- 3h. The number of individuals who reported improved financial wellbeing (as measured by CFPB financial assessment tool)
- Other indicators: increased savings, improved credit, purchased a home, etc.

### **Services: Income and Asset Building Services (Training and Counseling Services):**

- First Time Home Buyer
- Budget Buddies
- Money Smart
- Individual Financial Counseling
- Financial Skills Training

## Specific Objective #2: Better Identify Housing Needs of Low-income Clients & Increase the Number of Clients Receiving Direct Supports and Internal/External Referrals

### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, CAI will train and educate staff about internal and external housing resources, interventions and opportunities in the community allowing each program to better assist and increase the percentage of low-income residents receiving direct housing supports, including but not limited to: weatherization, improved energy efficiency and eviction avoidance.

Short-Term Annual Goals		
FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
FY 2021	<b>Develop Baselines &amp; Tracking</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Prescreening</u> - Identify and track low-income clients in need of housing supports and interventions using case management software.</li> <li>2. <u>Direct Housing Supports</u> – Identify and track low-income clients receiving direct housing supports via CAI programs, including RAFT, EFSP, LIHEAP, HEARTWAP, CARES, ECCF Covid Relief Fund, etc.</li> <li>3. <u>Referrals</u> – Identify and track the number of low-income clients receiving housing-related referrals.</li> </ol>	<p>CMS reports on number of families who have completed CMS screening assessment and, of that number, how many of them report the need for housing supports and interventions</p> <p>CMS reports on low-income participants who receive housing related referrals</p> <p>CMS reports on low-income participants who receive direct housing supports</p>
FY 2022	<b>Outreach</b> Expand outreach and awareness of internal and external housing programs to low-income households in the CAI Service area.  Collect and analyze community data.	<p>Program Directors will develop an outreach plan of the financial literacy program to low-income households with a coordinated team of agency trained staff and partnerships.</p> <p>Program Directors report on quarterly outreach efforts</p> <p>CMS reports on low-income participants who receive housing related referrals</p> <p>CMS reports on low-income participants who receive direct housing supports</p>

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
FY 2023	<p><b>Expansion</b> CAI will expand housing services to reach more low-income individuals.</p> <p>Collect and analyze community data.</p>	<p>Planning staff will work with Program Directors to expand housing services and programs to low-income households.</p> <p>Program Directors report on quarterly outreach efforts</p> <p>CMS reports on low-income participants who receive housing related referrals</p> <p>CMS reports on low-income participants who receive direct housing supports</p>

### CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

#### CSBG Goal 1. Individuals and Families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

##### Domain(s): Housing

#### NPI Housing Indicators

- 4b. The number of individuals who obtained safe & affordable housing
- 4e. The number of households who avoided eviction.
- 4h. The number of households with improved energy efficiency and/or energy-burden reduction in their homes.
- 4z. The number of individuals who obtained utilities or restored energy service

#### Housing Services:

##### Housing Payment Assistance

- Rent Payments (Includes Emergency Rent Payments)
- Deposit Payments
- Mortgage Payments (Includes Emergency Mortgage Payments)

##### Eviction Prevention Services

- Eviction Counseling
- Landlord/Tenant Mediations
- Landlord/Tenant Rights Education

##### Utility Payment Assistance

- Utility Payments (LIHEAP – Includes Emergency Utility Payments)
- Utility Deposits
- Utility Arrears Payments
- Level Billing Assistance

##### Housing Placement

- Rental Counseling

##### Housing Maintenance & Improvements

- Home Repairs (e.g., structural, appliance, heating systems, etc.)

##### Weatherization Services

- Energy Efficiency Improvements (e.g., insulation, air sealing, furnace repair, etc.)

### Specific Objective #3: Increase the Available Affordable Housing Resources at Presidential Gardens

#### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, CAI will work with engineers, funders and municipal leaders to explore the opportunity to add units and expand housing opportunities and resources at the Presidential Gardens Neighborhood Association (PGNA), a 200 unit, subsidized rental development with 20 one-, 140 two-, and 40 three-bedroom apartments in Haverhill.

#### Short-Term Annual Goals

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2021</b>	CAI with PGNA will develop the plan for adding units and other housing resources to its community.	Planning staff will work with the Assistant Director of Asset Management and the PGNA Board of Directors determine goals, needs and feasibility of expanding the housing stock at PGNA. This would include determining available resources and gaps as well as an initial list of developers, via RFP.
<b>FY 2022</b>	CAI and PGNA will determine funding and approval for moving forward with the project.  Collect and analyze community data.	Planning staff will work with Assistant Director of Asset Management and the PGNA Board to evaluate proposals and make a decision on implementation.
<b>FY 2023</b>	CAI and PGNA will proceed with the project and expand offering to the low-income community who are currently waitlisted as well as others in need.  Collect and analyze community data.	Planning staff will support the CAI Assistant Director and PGNA to develop a plan for outreach, recruiting and acquiring new tenants

#### CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

**CSBG Goal 1. Individuals and Families with low-incomes are stable and achieve economic security.**

**Domain(s): Housing**

##### NPI Housing Indicator

- 4b. The number of Individuals who obtained safe & affordable housing

##### Housing Services

- Permanent Housing Placements

## Specific Objective #4: Improve Employment Opportunities and Retention for Low-Income Clients

### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, CAI will leverage both the formal Adult Education program and MakeIT Haverhill partnership to build a network of support services that will assist clients in improving marketable skills, digital literacy, and resume and interview techniques. This would include training staff and volunteers to provide coaching and mentoring as well as outreach to external funders (city, banks, business partners) for specific services and referrals.

Short-Term Annual Goals		
FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2021</b>	<p><b>Develop Baselines and Tracking</b></p> <p>Catalog offerings, confirm partnerships and establish a referral process (pilot) for clients.</p>	<p>Report on types of services offered through (e.g., Adult Ed, ESL classes, MakeIT Haverhill job fair, available support services)</p> <p>Report on number of referrals to services</p> <p>Report on number who were enrolled in program and number who completed program</p>
<b>FY 2022</b>	<p><b>Outreach</b></p> <p>Evaluate outcomes, identify bottlenecks, areas for improvement and success factors to build awareness and engage community participants</p> <p>Collect and analyze community data.</p>	<p>MakeIT Haverhill to sponsor a Workforce Development Summit to engage partnering organizations, funding sources and appropriate referral processes.</p> <p>Program Directors will develop an outreach plan for education, training and employment support programs to low-income households with a coordinated team of agency trained staff and partnerships.</p> <p>Program Directors report on quarterly outreach efforts</p> <p>Report on number of referrals to services</p> <p>Report on number who were enrolled in program and number who completed program</p> <p>Develop strategy to track participant outcomes</p> <p>Planning staff will monitor flow of referrals and outcomes to regularly review with stakeholder organizations.</p>

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2023</b>	<p><b>Expansion</b></p> <p>Based on initial results and feedback, planning staff will determine additional programmatic support (services and staff training) and community outreach activities.</p> <p>Collect and analyze community data.</p>	<p>Program Directors report on quarterly outreach efforts</p> <p>Report on number of referrals to services</p> <p>Report on number who were enrolled in program and number who completed program</p> <p>Review and analyze participant outcome data</p> <p>Planning staff will monitor flow of referrals and outcomes to regularly review with stakeholder organizations.</p>

### CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

**CSBG Goal: Individuals and Families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.**

**Domain(s): Income and Asset Building; Employment**

#### **NPI Income, and Employment Indicators**

- 3h. The number of individuals engaged with the Community Action Agency who report improved financial well-being.
- 3f. The number of individuals who improved their credit scores.
- 1b. The number of unemployed adults who obtained employment (up to a living wage).
- 1h. The number of employed participants in a career-advancement related program who entered or transitioned into a position that provided increased income and/or benefits.

#### **Employment, Education and Income Services:**

- English Language Classes
- High School Equivalency Classes
- Applied Technology Classes
- Vocational Training
- Apprenticeships/Internships
- Job Readiness Training
- Career Counseling Workshops
- Career Counseling Coaching
- Job Search Coaching
- Job Search Resume Development
- Job Referrals
- Post-Employment Coaching
- Financial Capability Skills Training
- Financial Coaching/Counseling
- Financial Management Programs (including budgeting, credit management, credit repair, credit counseling, etc.)

## Specific Objective #5: Better Identify the Food Needs of Low-income Clients and Increase: Nutrition Education, Direct Food Supports and Referrals

### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, CAI will provide training to staff on how to evaluate the food needs of clients using an agency-wide needs assessment tool, identify appropriate internal and external food and nutrition resources, as well as complete referrals to these food resources to best assist clients to meet their food needs. Ensuring that staff are adept at addressing the critical issue of food insecurity will increase the number of income eligible residents receiving and using direct food supports, nutrition education and referrals to food assistance programs, including but not limited to: SNAP benefits, WIC benefits, food pantries and local meals. Additional program offerings, such as community gardens, that can build partnerships and add coordinated services to improve families' circumstances will also be explored.

Short-Term Annual Goals		
FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
FY 2021	<b>Develop Baselines and Tracking</b>	
	1. <u>Prescreening</u> - Identify and track low-income clients in need of food supports and interventions using agency case management software (CMS) or program specific software system	CMS (Case Management Services) reports to track low-income clients who receive direct food supports, services, nutritional education and/or or referrals.
	2. <u>Nutritional Education</u> – Identify and track low-income Northern Essex WIC clients participating in WIC's SMART Online Modules and Infant Feeding Classes	WIC monthly reports on number of WIC clients  WIC quarterly reports on number of WIC clients enrolled in SNAP  WIC monthly reports on number of referrals made to SNAP and/or food Resources
	3. <u>Direct Food Supports</u> – Identify and track low-income clients receiving direct food supports via CAI programs, including Amesbury Food Pantry, CAI Drop-in Center, Northern Essex WIC, Head Start/Early Head Start, Family Day Care, PGNA Food Pantry and the PGNA Youth Council.	CMS reports on SNAP assistance provided by WIC Family Support Coordinator  WIC monthly reports on number of WIC clients who complete SMART online modules and/or infant feeding classes
	4. <u>Referrals</u> – Identify and track the number of low-income clients receiving food-related referrals using case management software.	HS/EHS quarterly reports on the number of HS/EHS clients enrolled in SNAP and/or WIC at time of enrollment and at end of enrollment

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2022</b>	<p><b>Outreach</b> Expand outreach and awareness of internal and external food and nutrition programs and services to low-income households in the CAI Service area.</p> <p>Collect and analyze food related community data.</p>	<p>CMS (Case Management Services) reports to track low-income clients who receive direct food supports, services, nutritional education and/or or referrals.</p> <p>WIC quarterly reports on number of WIC clients enrolled in SNAP</p> <p>WIC monthly reports on number of referrals made to SNAP and/or food Resources</p> <p>WIC monthly reports on number of WIC clients</p> <p>CMS reports on SNAP assistance provided by WIC Family Support Coordinator</p> <p>WIC monthly reports on number of WIC clients who complete SMART online modules and/or infant feeding classes</p> <p>WIC monthly reports on client redemption rate</p> <p>Head Start / Early Head Start reports on how many clients enrolled in SNAP and WIC at enrollment and at end of enrollment</p> <p>CAI reports on staff trainings</p>
<b>FY 2023</b>	<p><b>Expansion</b> CAI will expand food and nutrition services and supports to reach more low-income individuals.</p> <p>Will actively pursue opportunities to partner and collaborate around community food needs.</p> <p>Collect and analyze food related community data.</p>	<p>CMS (Case Management Services) reports to track low-income clients who receive direct food supports, services, nutritional education and/or or referrals, compare to the FY18 baseline.</p> <p>WIC reports on number of WIC clients who complete SMART online modules and/or infant feeding classes.</p> <p>WIC monthly reports on client redemption rate.</p> <p>Head Start / Early Head Start reports on how many clients enrolled in SNAP and WIC at enrollment and at end of enrollment.</p> <p>CAI reports on community partnerships related to food and nutrition.</p> <p>CAI reports on staff trainings.</p>

## CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

**CSBG Goal:** Individuals and Families with low-incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

**Domain(s):** Health and Social/Behavioral Development; Income

### Health NPI Indicators

- 5a. The number of individuals who demonstrated increased nutrition skills (e.g., cooking, shopping, and growing food).
- 5b. The number of individuals who demonstrated improved physical health and well-being
- 5z.1 The number of individuals who reported a better sense of food security.

### Income and Health & Social Services:

- 3l. SNAP Benefits
- 5ff. Skills Classes (Gardening, Cooking, Nutrition)
- 5gg. Community Gardening Activities
- 5jj. Food Distribution (Food Bags/Boxes, Food Share Program, Bags of Groceries)

## Specific Objective #6: Increase Enrollment and Participation in federally funded food benefit programs (WIC & SNAP) for Eligible Clients.

### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, WIC and EHS/HS staff will educate clients about SNAP guidelines and benefits, as well as provide referrals for application assistance and/or provide direct support applying for and enrolling in SNAP. Staff will encourage SNAP participants to consistently redeem their full food benefits package.

Early Head Start / Head Start staff will work to increase education about, enrollment in and utilization of the WIC program using the practices listed above, along with the use of internal referrals and warm handoffs, whenever appropriate. Staff from both WIC and EHS/HS programs will educate and support families to maximize redemption practices. WIC staff will work with WIC program participants to support participants with low redemption rates.

Short-Term Annual Goals		
FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>Develop Baselines and Tracking</b> Identify and track CAI Northern Essex WIC clients currently receiving SNAP benefits and Early Head Start / Head Start clients currently receiving SNAP benefits and/or WIC benefits	WIC monthly reports of clients enrolled in SNAP  CMS monthly report of number of SNAP applications processed by WIC Family Support Coordinator  Early Head Start / Head Start reports on how many clients enrolled in SNAP and WIC at enrollment and at end of enrollment.
<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>Outreach</b> Expand outreach and awareness of SNAP to CAI Northern Essex WIC Clients. Northern Essex WIC's Family Support Coordinator will increase the number of clients receiving SNAP application assistance.  Expand outreach and awareness of SNAP and WIC to Early Head Start / Head Start clients. Ensure that Family Advocate staff proficient at providing application assistance and/or referrals, as appropriate.  Collect and analyze community data.	WIC monthly reports of clients enrolled in SNAP  CMS monthly report of number of SNAP applications processed by WIC Family Support Coordinator  Early Head Start / Head Start reports on how many clients enrolled in SNAP and WIC at enrollment and at end of enrollment.

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2023</b>	<p><b>Expansion</b></p> <p>CAI will continue to work to increase the number of low-income clients who successfully enroll in and receive SNAP benefits.</p> <p>CAI WIC will monitor clients with low redemption rates and will provide additional outreach to identify barriers to redemption and offer support.</p> <p>CAI will continue to work to increase the number of low-income clients who successfully enroll in and receive SNAP and WIC benefits.</p>	<p>WIC monthly reports of clients enrolled in SNAP</p> <p>CMS monthly report of number of SNAP applications processed by WIC Family Support Coordinator</p> <p>WIC quarterly reports on client redemption rates</p> <p>WIC quarterly reports on staff engagement with clients with low redemption rates, barriers, and supports offered</p> <p>Early Head Start / Head Start quarterly reports on how many clients enrolled in SNAP and WIC at enrollment and at end of enrollment.</p>

### CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

**CSBG Goal: Individuals and Families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.**  
**Domain(s): Health and Social/Behavioral Development**

#### NPI Health Indicators

- 5z.1 The number of individuals who reported a better sense of food security.
- 5z.11 The number of individuals with improved food security

#### Services:

- Benefit Coordination and Advocacy SNAP Benefits
- Eligibility Determinations

## Specific Objective #7: Increase access to and utilization of high-quality early childhood opportunities for low-income families

### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, CAI will maximize access to and utilization of early learning slots. Additionally, CAI will enhance the provision of developmental services for low-income birth to 5 and comprehensive family supports for their families by providing strong relationship-based experiences at partner childcare facilities and through homebased programming.

### Short-Term Annual Goals

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>Develop Baselines and Tracking</b>  Review challenges related to achieving the full staffing critical to be able to recruit for full enrollment and develop action plan to address emerging concerns and identified barriers.	CAI Head Start / Early Head Start 2021 Goals Document  Monthly enrollment reports  Monthly waitlist reports
<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>Outreach</b>  Full enrollment of students in Head Start / Early Head Start and Family Day Care programs. Ongoing outreach, recruitment and enrollment for funded enrollment slots in all HS / EHS and FDC program options.	Monthly enrollment reports  Monthly waitlist reports  HS / EHS Quarterly Social Media Calendar  HS / EHS Quarterly Community Event Participation Record  Client Satisfaction Survey Report
<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>Expansion</b> Continue outreach and enrollment for the Early Head Start/Head Start slots.  Use internal and external referrals as a valuable tool to build community visibility, enhance trust, foster partnerships and ensure a warm hand-off for client.	Monthly enrollment reports  Monthly waitlist reports  HS / EHS Quarterly Social Media Calendar  HS / EHS Quarterly Community Event Participation Record  CMS data on internal referrals  Client Satisfaction Survey Report

## CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

**CSBG Goal: Individuals and Families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.**

**Domain(s): Education and Cognitive Development**

**NPIs:**

**Education and Cognitive Development Indicators**

- 2a: The number of children (0 to 5) who demonstrated improved emergent literacy skills
- 2b. The number of children (0 to 5) who demonstrated skills for school readiness.
- 2c. The number of children and youth who demonstrated improved positive approaches toward learning, including improved attention

**Services:**

**Education and Cognitive Development Services -Child/Young Adult Education Programs**

- 2a. Early Head Start
- 2b. Head Start
- 2c. Other Early-Childhood (0-5 yr. old) Education

## Specific Objective #8: Staff Development and Retention

### 3-Year Specific Objective

During FY2021-23, CAI will conduct outreach to recruit new and seasoned early childhood educators, provide formal onboarding process and ongoing professional development in order to establish a committed, engaged and skilled educator workforce interested in filling early learning positions at CAI and other area early childhood settings. As a result, CAI will have the qualified staff required to maximize use of available CAI early learning slots for interested families in the community and ensure provision of quality early education services and comprehensive family supports.

### Short-Term Annual Goals

FISCAL YEAR	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>Develop Baselines and Tracking</b>  Program staff will review existing staffing models and current vacancies, evaluate organizational staffing needs, cross reference proposed staffing models with Head Start standards and EEC guidance; and create hiring plan that enables program to identify skills required to provide high quality early learning services for each Head Start/Early Head Start offering.	Head Start / Early Head Start Staffing Summary Report  FDC Staffing Summary Report  Head Start / Early Head Start 2021 Goals Document
<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>Outreach</b>  Program staff will establish an outreach communication plan to connect eligible applicants with employment opportunities and training resources. This may also include the provision of coaching and mentoring resources to existing staff.  Collect and analyze available data.	Head Start / Early Head Start Staffing Quarterly Summary Report  FDC Quarterly Staffing Summary Report Head Start / Early Head Start Quarterly Outreach and Recruitment Tracking Report  HS/EHS and NECC Teacher Training program (enrollment, completion and progress)  Head Start / Early Head Start Quarterly Professional Development Report  Head Start and Family Day Care Annual Staff Satisfaction Survey Report

	GOAL	PLAN MONITORING & REPORTING
<b>FY 2023</b>	<p><b>Expansion</b></p> <p>Professional development will be expanded to provide a set of professional development options for new to senior staff that allows for ongoing growth, exposure to learning, opportunities for skill development and, ultimately, higher level of professional satisfaction and competency.</p> <p>Collect and analyze available data.</p>	<p>Head Start / Early Head Start Staffing Quarterly Summary Report</p> <p>FDC Quarterly Staffing Summary Report</p> <p>Head Start / Early Head Start Quarterly Outreach and Recruitment Tracking Report</p> <p>HS/EHS and NECC Teacher Training program data (enrollment, completion and progress)</p> <p>Head Start / Early Head Start Quarterly Professional Development Report</p> <p>Head Start and Family Day Care Annual Staff Satisfaction Survey Report</p>

### CSBG National Performance Indicators and Services

**CSBG Goal: Individuals and Families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.**

**Domain(s): Education and Cognitive Development; Agency Capacity Building**

#### NPI Indicators

- 2h The number of individuals who obtained a recognized credential, certificate, or degree relating to the achievement of educational or vocational skills.
- Decrease the number of vacant staff positions
- Decrease the rate of staff turnover
- Increase the rate of early learning services staff that achieve career advancement within CAI Early Learning Services or CAI
- Increase the longevity of staff within CAI Early Learning Services

#### Adult Education Services:

- 2f. Financial Literacy Education
- 2q. Leadership Training
- 2w. Parenting Supports (may be a part of the early childhood programs identified above)
- 2y. Post-Secondary Education Preparation
- 2aa. Post-Secondary Education Supports- College Applications, Textbooks, Computers, etc.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Plan to Plan

Planning Committee Members		
Member Name/Position	Representing <i>e.g. – Board, staff, volunteer, partner agency, outside consultant, etc.</i>	Assessment Activities Involved In
John Cuneo, President	CAI staff MWA Make-IT Haverhill Latinx Coalition	Surveys, Interviews, Focus Groups, Internal Assessment  Analysis of assessment tools and review of CARSP
Lucinda Nolet	CAI Board Chairperson	Surveys, Focus Groups, Analysis of Assessment, review of CARSP  Survey Distribution and Focus Group at Buttonwoods: 10/8/19  Encourage Board members to participate in the CARSP
Marie Artman Bryan MacPhail Jane Sutter Lisa Valcich	CAI Board Planning and Evaluation Committee	Design and review survey Distribute surveys  Conduct interviews  Encourage BOD members to distribute surveys  Analyze survey results  Develop Strategies and goals  Communicate with community members and Board members
Kerri Sheeran Perry	CAI Planning and Development	Draft survey tool, distribute survey, collect and analyze data, attend CARSP meetings and workshops, manage interviews and focus groups, draft CARSP
Katrina Heisler	CAI Planning and Development	Draft Survey, distribute survey, collect and analyze data, manage interviews and focus groups, draft CARSP
Greg Betley	Project Manager, Case Management Systems	Data collection and review, mission and vision statement review
Tiffany Ghrist	CAI Head Start	Survey distribution and collection (with award letters) 10/01/19.
Iris Navarez	CAI Front Desk	Survey distribution and collection.

Schedule of Activities		
Activity <i>e.g. – review mission, gather quantitative data, administer surveys, conduct stakeholder interviews/focus groups, analyze results, determine strategic goals, write CARSP, etc.</i>	Lead/Point of Contact Name	Timeline
Draft Community Assessment	KSP, JC, CAI BOD	Completed August 1, 2019
Translate Community Assessment (Spanish)	Iris Narvaez	Completed August 5, 2019
Distribute Assessments	KSP	August 1, 2019 - February 1, 2020
Collect Assessments and input data	KSP/KH	August 1, 2020 – February 29, 2020
Meeting of CAI BOD Executive Committee to review and approve Plan to Plan	JC	September 13, 2019
Submit Community & Internal Assessment Plan	KSP and KH	September 16, 2019
Webinar: Using & Prioritizing Your Community Needs Assessment	KH and KSP	September 18, 2019
Review Plan to Plan with Board	KSP	September 25, 2019
Focus Group at Buttonwoods with Lucinda Nolet (Chairperson of BOD)	KSP and LN	October 8, 2019
CARSP Presentation and kick-off at CAI All-Staff meeting and Staff Assessment	KSP, KH and GB	October 11, 2019
CARSP MASSCAP Kick-off	KSP, KH, TG and GB	October 16, 2019
CAI Board Mission review and analysis.	KSP and JC	Introduced October 30, 2019 Reviewed with Worksheet and discussion: February 26, 2020
Distribute Survey to staff members and post on social media and website	KH and KSP	November and December 2019
Research and integrate demographic data provided by MASSCAP and SMC Partners	KSP and KH	March 1, 2020 – May 1, 2020
Review demographic data with BOD members and CAI leadership	KSP and JC	April 2020
Interviews and Focus Groups	KSP, JC, BOD members	March 2020 – April 2020
Analyze risk assessment data with committee members	JC, KSP, LN	May 2020
Client Satisfaction Survey Distribution	KSP and KH	April 1 – April 30, 2020
Analyze assessment data		May 1 – May 30, 2020
Draft CARSP	KSP and KH	May 1 – June 15, 2020
Board Presentation and CARSP Approval	KSP	June 24, 2020
CARSP Submission	KSP and KH	July 1, 2020

Partner Organizations/Stakeholder Engagement	
Partner/Stakeholder Type*	How will they be engaged? <i>e.g. – survey, interview, focus group, etc.</i>
Community-Based Organizations ( <i>including other CAAs</i> )	<p>Survey Distribution:  YWCA Newburyport  YMCA Haverhill  The Giving Tree Boxford  Our Neighbor's Table Amesbury 8/26/19  Newburyport Community Services 8/26/19  Amesbury Senior Center 8/26/19  Pettengill House 8/26/19  Emmaus, Inc. 8/27/19  Make-IT Haverhill 9/18/19  Rowley Food Pantry 8/29/19  Women in Transition 10/15/19</p> <p>Focus Groups and Interviews</p> <p>Met with five Essex County CAP planners to develop common questions and review consultant data. Will share survey results, esp. around financial literacy to improve outcomes for Essex County Coalition</p>
Faith-Based Organizations	<p>Survey Distribution:  Salvation Army - Haverhill 9/3  Salvation Army – Newburyport 8/26  Central Congregational Church – Newburyport  UU Church – Haverhill  Union Church – Amesbury  First Parish Church – Newbury (also houses Newbury Food Pantry) 9/3</p>
Private Sector	<p>Financial Literacy Focus Groups:  Haverhill Bank  Pentucket Bank  Institution for Savings</p> <p>Employment Focus Groups  Haverhill Chamber  Employers (Fantini, Southwick)</p>
Public Sector	<p>Board members associated with a mayor, or legislative representative will connect with the office for an interview.  Quasi-public – WIB</p>
Educational Institutions	<p>Survey Distribution:  Supt. Marotta and Director of Nursing - Haverhill  Supt. Brian Forget – Triton</p>

Partner Organizations/Stakeholder Engagement	
Partner/Stakeholder Type*	How will they be engaged? <i>e.g. – survey, interview, focus group, etc.</i>
Other Community Action Agencies	Essex County CAA planners met on 7/11/19 to discuss the survey tool and common questions  Will work with Action, Inc. to review assessment results and demographic data (WIC and Weatherization serve both regions).
Libraries	Amesbury 8/26/19 Merrimac 9/13/19 (M. Artman) Groveland 9/13/19 (M. Artman) Haverhill (through FCC)
Service Clubs	Rotary Breakfast Exchange
Agency customers	Survey distribution through mailings (LIHEAP 10/15/19), email, and at program sites
Low-income community members ( <i>including non-customers</i> )	Survey distribution to community partners, Board members, stakeholders, and at community events, including National Nights Out (8/6/19) -- Haverhill, Salisbury and Amesbury  Phoenix Row (11/19) PGNA (11/19 and 2/20)  Focus group at AHEPA Buttonwoods low income, elderly housing dev. 10/8/19
Agency Staff	Survey distributed and collected
Volunteers	Drop In Center Head Start
Board Members	Board members have distributed and collected surveys in their communities. They will interview community leaders, review the agency mission, and participate in analyzing data and developing goals and strategies.
Low Income Elderly Housing Developments	Survey Distribution: Buttonwoods - Haverhill 7/31/19, 9/3 Bethany Communities Karen Sheehan 8/30/19: Phoenix Row – Haverhill Merrivista -- Haverhill
Low Income Housing Developments	Survey Distribution: PGNA – Haverhill (11/19 and 2/20)
Councils on Aging	Haverhill (focus group TBD) Amesbury 8/26/19 Newburyport 9/3/19
Shelters	Emmaus 8/30/19 CAI Drop-In Center 2/20

## Appendix B

### Community Profile Data Sources

Data Sources	
Quantitative Data Source <i>(e.g. - Census, client database, etc.)</i>	Partner Organization/Stakeholder Engaged <i>(if Applicable)</i>
Community Action, Inc. client databases (CMS, Childplus, EOS, LIHEAP)	Community Action, Inc.
<a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a> . <a href="http://factfinder.census.gov">factfinder.census.gov</a>	US Census Bureau
United States Census Bureau Quick Facts population estimates. July 1, 2015 (V2015)	US Census Bureau
2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS) <a href="http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs">www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs</a>	US Census Bureau
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston New England City Data	Federal Reserve Bank of Boston
Employment Statistics	Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CCNA) Tool and Mapping Hub	<a href="http://www.communitycommons.org/groups/community-action-partnership/">www.communitycommons.org/groups/community-action-partnership/</a>
A Community Action Guide to Comprehensive Community Needs Assessments	<a href="http://www.Nascsp.org/data/files/CSBG">www.Nascsp.org/data/files/CSBG</a>
Municipal Statistics, Housing Production Plans and Master Plans	Mayor's Offices: Haverhill, Newburyport, Amesbury Public School Departments; Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
Impact Essex County	Essex County Community Foundation

## Appendix C

### Community Action, Inc. Programs

<b>Housing</b>	
Landlord/tenant counseling	Clients receive information regarding tenant/landlord issues as part of CAI's Community Services Program
RAFT	RAFT provides short-term financial assistance to families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Eligible uses include moving cost assistance, rent and utility arrears, rental stipends or utility bills.
EFSP	The CAI Haverhill Office administers the Emergency Food, Shelter, Rent and Utility Program (EFSP).
LIHEAP	The CAI Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps income-eligible households pay a portion of their heating bills or 30% of their rent if the heat is included between November 1 and April 30.
Weatherization	The Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) provides up to \$7500 in added insulation, and general plugging of air leaks to homes and apartments for those households eligible for LIHEAP. This program also operates year-round.
<b>Education and Cognitive Development</b>	
Head Start/Early Head Start	Comprehensive services for children ages 0 to 5 years old, including: the highest quality educators, classrooms and outdoor space; Kindergarten preparedness utilizing curriculum aligned with MA Early Learning Standards; healthy meals and snacks; family and health services and more.
Family Day Care	Comprehensive Family Child Care services for children 8 weeks to 12 years old. Care is provided in safe and nurturing environments in licensed and monitored day care homes in the Merrimack Valley area.
Family and Community Connection	Helping parents access the resources and support that they need to be the best parents they can be. Programs include playgroups, activities, parent support groups and more. Programs are available to families with children birth through age 8.
Adult Education	High School Equivalency Test (HSE) preparation classes are offered to prepare students to take and pass the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET).
English for Speakers of Other Languages	English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. Learn English to: Communicate with a boss, their children, their doctor. Prepare for college or job training
<b>Employment</b>	
Make-IT Haverhill	MakeIT Haverhill is a partnership between Community Action, Inc. [a Haverhill (MA) 501(c)(3) non-profit] and Urban Kindness [the Haverhill (MA) Mt Washington Neighborhood Group] developing a "Collaborative Makerspace" for the Mt Washington Community and Haverhill.
Adult Education	The program offers instruction in resume development.
CDA Program	The CDA (Child Development Associate) Credential is a national credential that is "the best first step" in professional qualifications in the early childhood field. CAI offers training opportunities to meet the 120 hours and, if needed, the 480 hands-on infant/toddler or preschool classroom hours.
CDL Program	CAI offers a no-cost CDL Training course that includes 20 hours of permit preparation classes and 40 hours of behind-the-wheel training. After completing 20 hours of classroom training, participants will take the MA CDL permit exam.

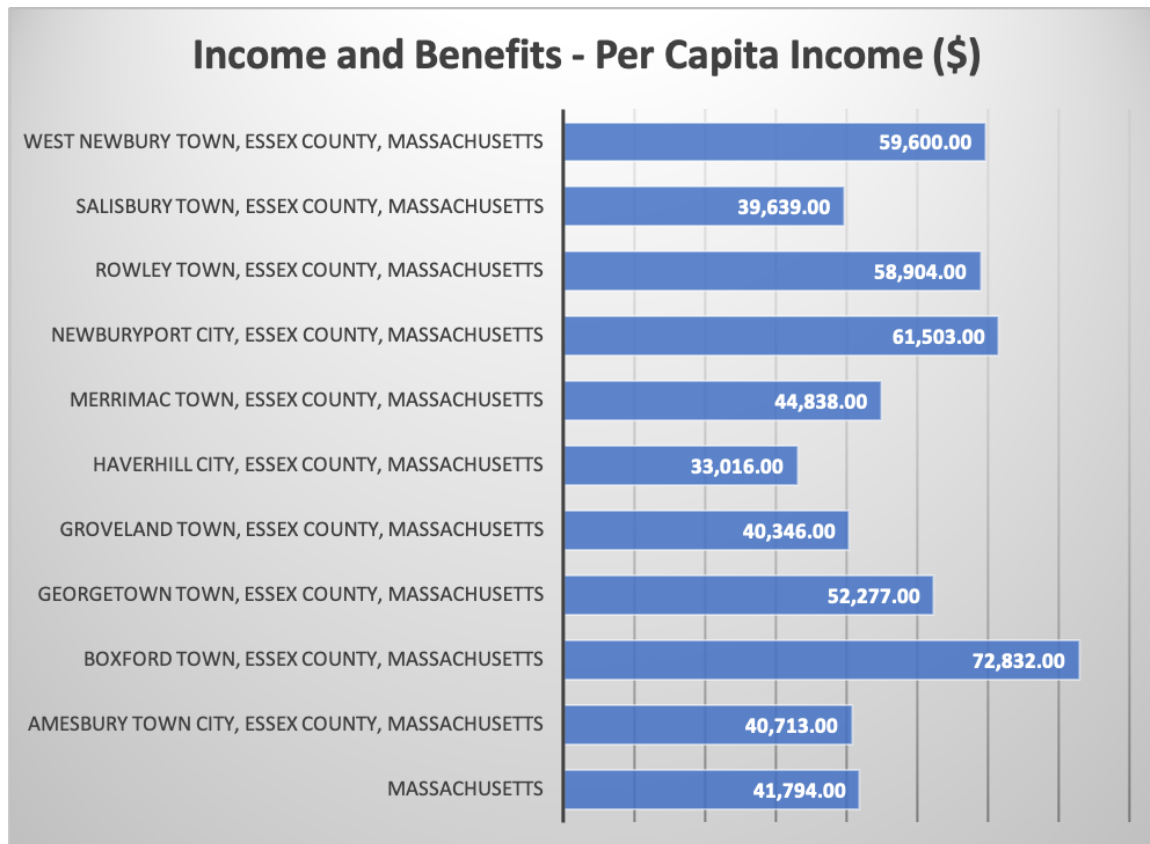
<b>Health and Social/Behavioral Development</b>	
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	CAI Northern Essex WIC's Nutrition Program provides nutrition, health education and other services free of charge to Massachusetts families who qualify.
SNAP	The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides a monthly benefit to low-income U.S. citizens or legal noncitizens to buy nutritious foods.
Cooking Matters	Cooking Matters teaches participants to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make healthier choices and cook delicious, affordable meals.
Drop-In Center	The Drop-In Center, operated by Community Action, Inc., serves as Haverhill's only drop-in day program for the area's homeless and indigent individual
Food Pantry	The CAI Amesbury Center Food Pantry serves the following Massachusetts cities and towns: Amesbury and Merrimac (twice a month) Newburyport, Newbury, West Newbury and Salisbury (once a month).
Clothing Services	The CAI Amesbury Center Clothing Bank serves residents of the following Massachusetts cities and towns: Amesbury, Merrimac, Newburyport, Newbury, West Newbury, and Salisbury.
<b>Income, Infrastructure and Asset Building</b>	
First Time Home Buyer Education Classes	The program is certified by the Massachusetts Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) and Mass Housing and includes training in obtaining a mortgage, budgeting, credit, housing search, appraisals, condominium purchase, legal issues, insurance, housing law, tax advantages, home inspection and many other topics related to home purchase.
Budget Buddies	Budget Buddies builds the financial literacy, confidence, and security of low-income women and girls through a unique program that combines instructional workshops and personal, one-to-one coaching.
<b>Civic Engagement and Community Involvement</b>	
Christmas Tree Santas	Each year, over 200 Christmas Trees, donated by Christmas Tree Santas, have been distributed to families who have children in the CAI Head Start, Early Head Start and Family Day Care programs.
Gazette Santas	Each December more than 200 Haverhill households receive vouchers for gifts and food from the Gazette Santa Fund, sponsored by the Haverhill Gazette. CAI's Community Services department administers this program.
Latino Coalition - Haverhill	The Latino Coalition Haverhill is a nonpartisan group of Haverhill citizens who are working to make difference in our community in collaboration with our local, state government and school system.

## Appendix D

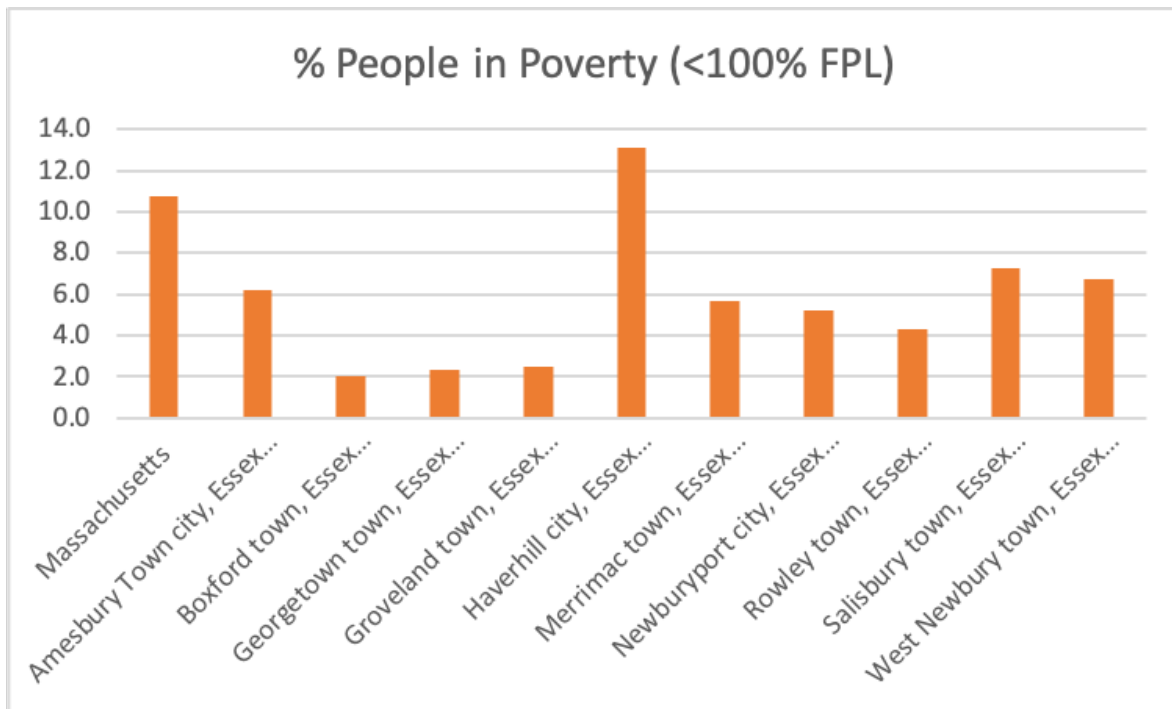
### Poverty Statistics for Region

(Data are based on ACS Reports for 2018, as aggregated by the MassCAP CARSP Project. Note that some town have small data sets that may not be statistically reliable.)

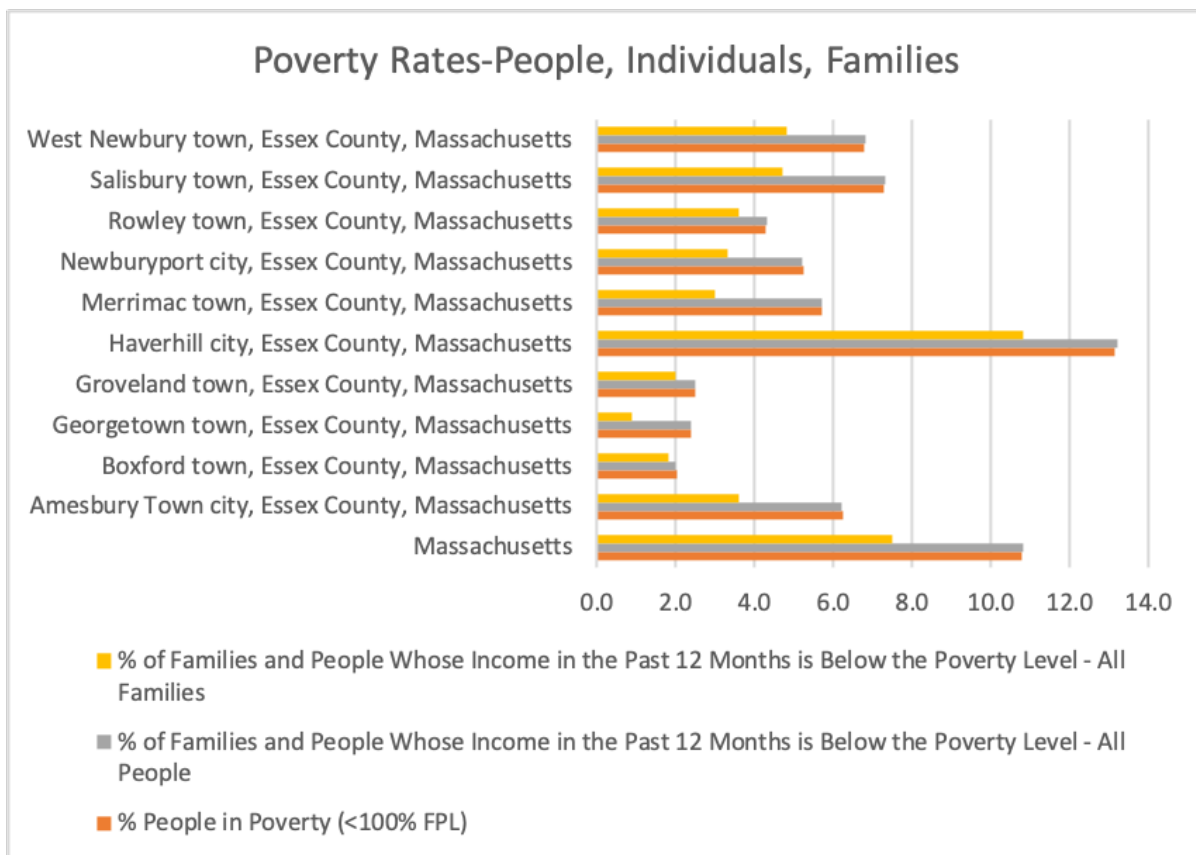
#### Income and Poverty Levels

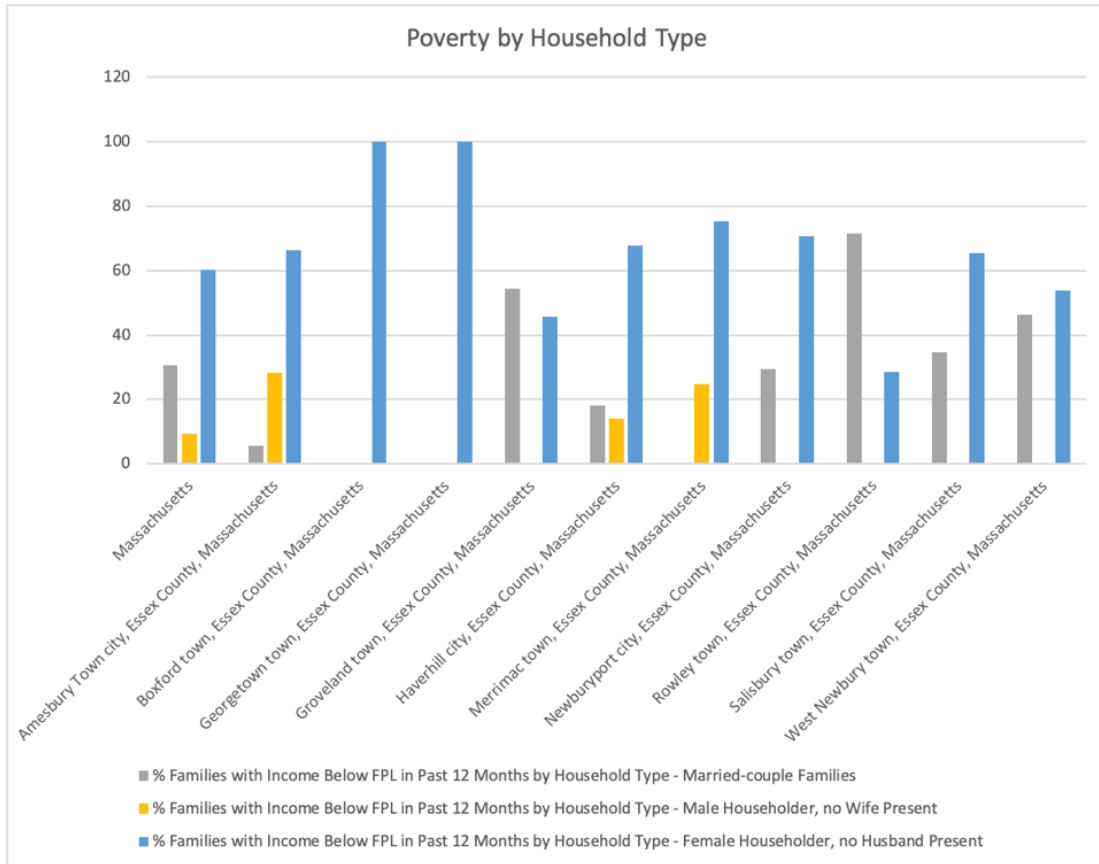


Haverhill, Amesbury, and Salisbury show lowest per capita income in the region. These three plus West Newbury have highest rates of poverty:

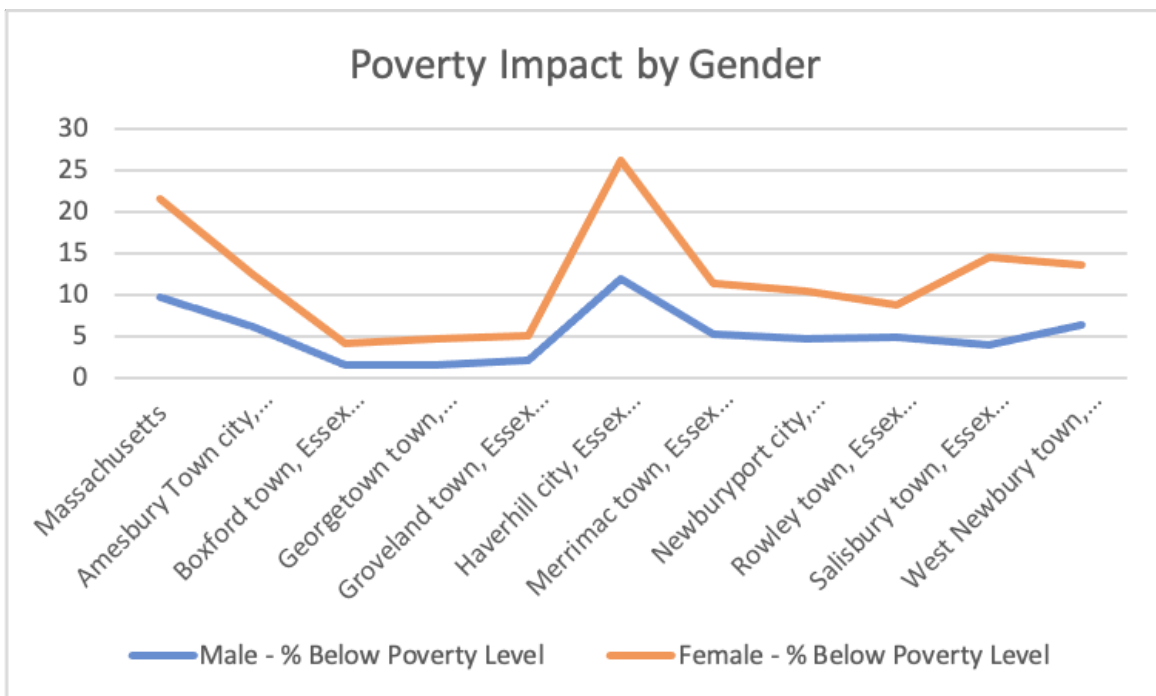


## Poverty Rates – Individuals and Families

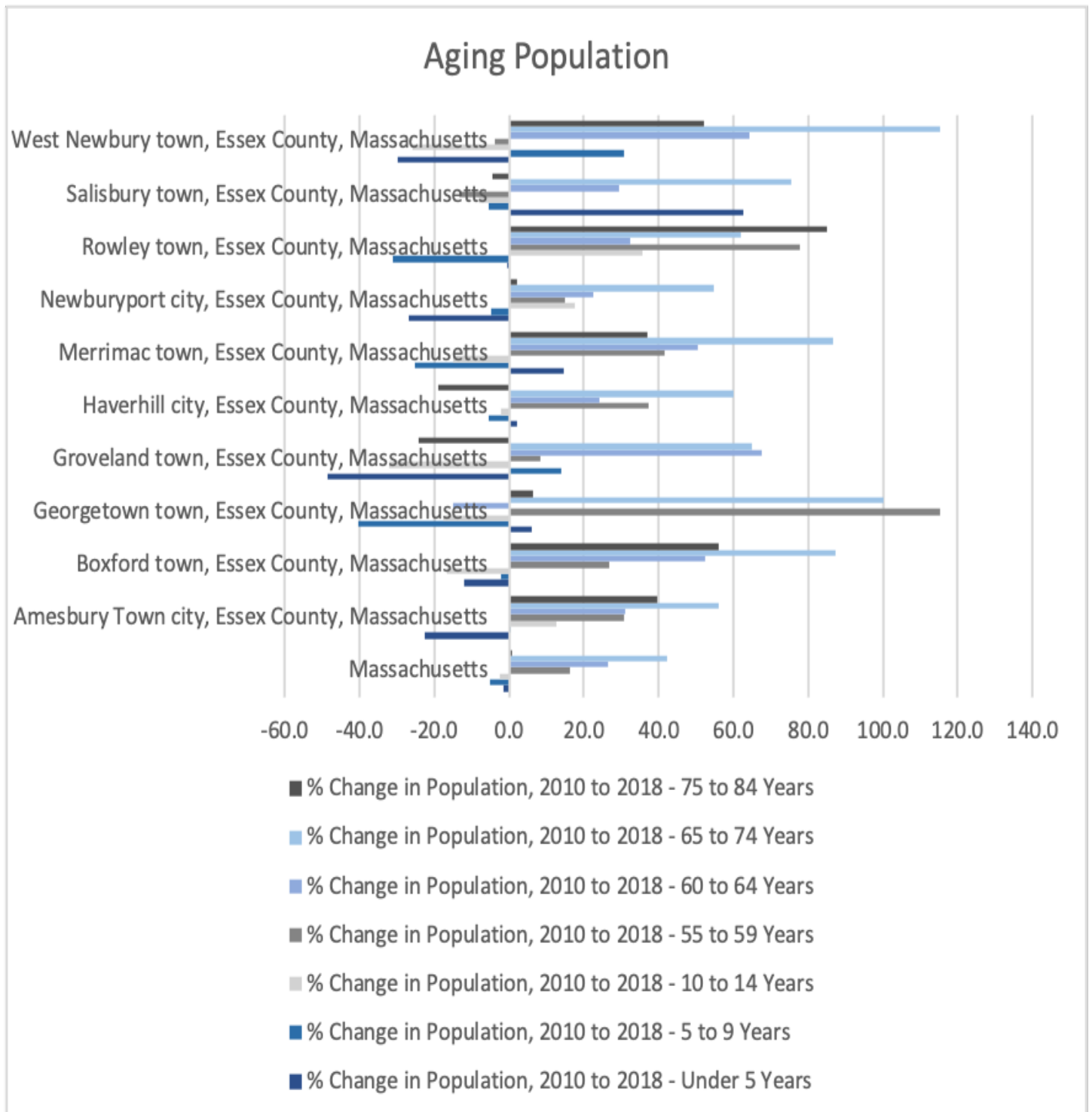




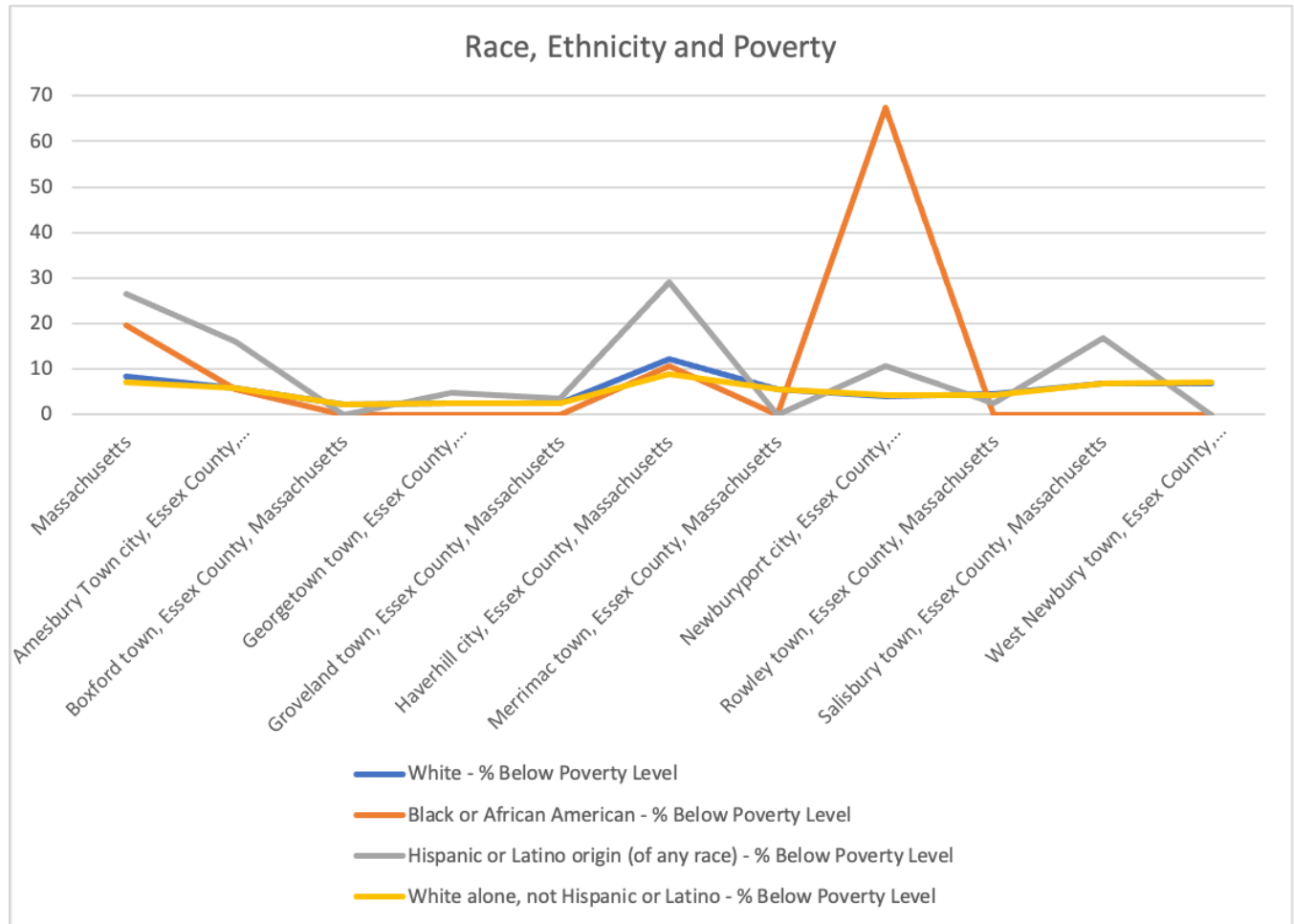
Single Female Households are at greatest risk from poverty. Note: Boxford and Georgetown may have low reported poverty counts overall given the limited data available.



## Age and Poverty



## Race/Ethnicity



Higher poverty levels amongst the Hispanic community as well as African Americans in Newburyport.

## Source data

Town/City	% of Families and People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Level - All People	% of Families and People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Level - All Families	% Families with Income Below FPL in Past 12 Months by Household Type - Married-couple Families	% Families with Income Below FPL in Past 12 Months by Household Type - Male Householder, no Wife Present	% Families with Income Below FPL in Past 12 Months by Household Type - Female Householder, no Husband Present
Amesbury Town city, Essex County, Massachusetts	6.2	3.6	5.6	28.1	66.3
Boxford town, Essex County, Massachusetts	2	1.8	0	0	100
Georgetown town, Essex County, Massachusetts	2.4	0.9	0	0	100
Groveland town, Essex County, Massachusetts	2.5	2	54.3	0	45.7
Haverhill city, Essex County, Massachusetts	13.2	10.8	18.2	13.9	67.9
Merrimac town, Essex County, Massachusetts	5.7	3	0	24.6	75.4
Newburyport city, Essex County, Massachusetts	5.2	3.3	29.3	0	70.7
Rowley town, Essex County, Massachusetts	4.3	3.6	71.4	0	28.6
Salisbury town, Essex County, Massachusetts	7.3	4.7	34.7	0	65.3
West Newbury town, Essex County, Massachusetts	6.8	4.8	46.2	0	53.8
Massachusetts	10.8	7.5	30.7	9.2	60.1

Town/City	% People in Poverty (<100% FPL)	% Adults 18 Years and over in Poverty (<100%FPL)	% Children Under 18 Years, in Poverty (<100% FPL)	18 to 34 years - % Below Poverty Level	35 to 64 years - % Below Poverty Level	65 years and over - % Below Poverty Level
Amesbury Town city, Essex County, Massachusetts	6.2	6.0	6.9	8.2	4.9	6.7
Boxford town, Essex County, Massachusetts	2.0	1.2	4.5	0	1.6	1
Georgetown town, Essex County, Massachusetts	2.4	2.4	2.4	1.8	1.2	6.6
Groveland town, Essex County, Massachusetts	2.5	2.6	2.2	0	1.1	9.2
Haverhill city, Essex County, Massachusetts	13.2	10.4	22.5	13	9.6	7.9
Merrimac town, Essex County, Massachusetts	5.7	4.8	9.3	8.8	4.8	2.3
Newburyport city, Essex County, Massachusetts	5.2	4.9	6.6	9.9	4.1	3.6
Rowley town, Essex County, Massachusetts	4.3	3.3	7.8	0.1	4.7	2
Salisbury town, Essex County, Massachusetts	7.3	7.5	6.4	7.4	7.9	6.5
West Newbury town, Essex County, Massachusetts	6.8	4.8	13.3	6	5.5	1.9
Massachusetts	10.8	10.0	13.9	13.6	8.3	9

Town/City	Male - % Below Poverty Level	Female - % Below Poverty Level	White - % Below Poverty Level	Black or African American - % Below Poverty Level	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race) - % Below Poverty Level	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino - % Below Poverty Level
Amesbury Town city, Essex County, Massachusetts	6.2	6.3	5.9	5.5	16.1	5.8
Boxford town, Essex County, Massachusetts	1.5	2.6	2.2	-	0	2.2
Georgetown town, Essex County, Massachusetts	1.5	3.2	2.5	0	4.7	2.4
Groveland town, Essex County, Massachusetts	2.1	2.9	2.6	0	3.6	2.5
Haverhill city, Essex County, Massachusetts	12	14.3	12.1	10.7	29.1	8.8
Merrimac town, Essex County, Massachusetts	5.3	6.1	5.5	-	0	5.7
Newburyport city, Essex County, Massachusetts	4.6	5.8	4.1	67.4	10.8	4.2
Rowley town, Essex County, Massachusetts	4.9	3.8	4.5	0	2.5	4.4
Salisbury town, Essex County, Massachusetts	4	10.6	6.9	0	16.9	6.8
West Newbury town, Essex County, Massachusetts	6.3	7.3	6.9	-	0	7
Massachusetts	9.6	11.9	8.5	19.7	26.6	7.1

