

Worcester
Community
Action Council

2016
ANNUAL
REPORT

PATHWAYS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY





A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

DEAR FRIENDS,

“One of the greatest things you can do to help others is not just to share and give what you have, but to help them discover what they have within themselves to help themselves.”

– Rita Zahara

The Worcester Community Action Council strives to do just that, with self-sufficiency at the heart of all of the agency’s programs and services. Whether it be helping first time parents navigate the challenges of raising a newborn; helping young children gain early literacy and development skills as a foundation for life-long learning and success; providing at-risk teens and young adults with educational and employment training, certificate options and real world work experience; providing quality childcare to allow parents to find secure employment; or helping people with disabilities, seniors, veterans

and others with limited income remain warm in their homes – WCAC works to meet the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors by providing the tools and support they require.

We, along with our dynamic Board of Directors, remain dedicated to helping individuals and families move to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships and advocacy.

While challenges related to poverty, income equality and economic opportunity continue, WCAC stands strong, experienced and prepared to continue this important work – opening paths to self-sufficiency for all those who walk through our doors. Thank you for your continued support of WCAC!

With warm regards,

Jill C. Dagilis
Executive Director

Steven G. Joseph
Chairman of the Board



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PROGRAM OUTCOMES

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

- » WCAC Head Start served 251 preschoolers from 235 families during the 2015-2016 school year; 106 enrolled in full-day, 115 in a part-day program, allowing 164 parents to hold employment, with another 60 able to pursue school or job training.
- » 118 preschoolers “graduated” from the agency’s program, enrolling in kindergarten in area public schools better prepared, ready and eager to learn due to the head start afforded them.
- » WCAC is proud of our highly credentialed Head Start teaching staff: five hold Master’s Degrees; 13 hold Bachelor’s Degrees; 7 hold Associate’s degrees; and four currently have a DEEC license and are working towards additional credentials.
- » The agency’s 14 Head Start classrooms were supported throughout the school year by 738 volunteers, 251 of which were current or former Head Start parents.
- » 86 infants and toddlers participated in activities and developed school-readiness skills through the agency’s Early Head Start program.
- » Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County provided parent support and newborn home visits to promote positive parenting choices and prevent child abuse and neglect to 148 first-time parents.



WCAC
HEAD START
SERVED **251**
PRESCHOOLERS
ALLOWING **164** PARENTS
TO HOLD EMPLOYMENT



118 PRESCHOOLERS
“GRADUATED” FROM HEAD START

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

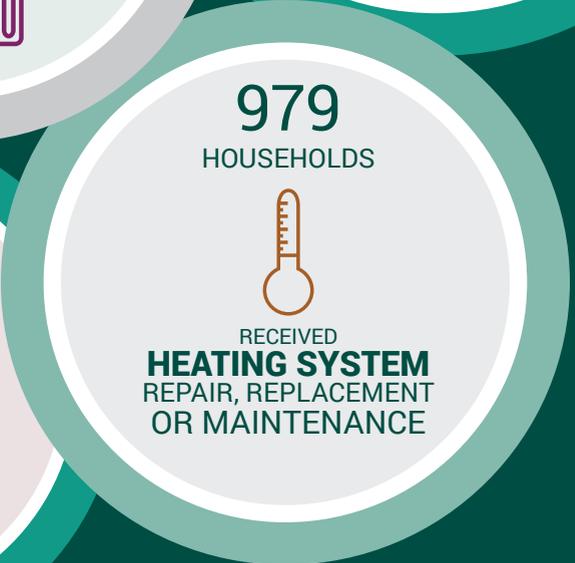
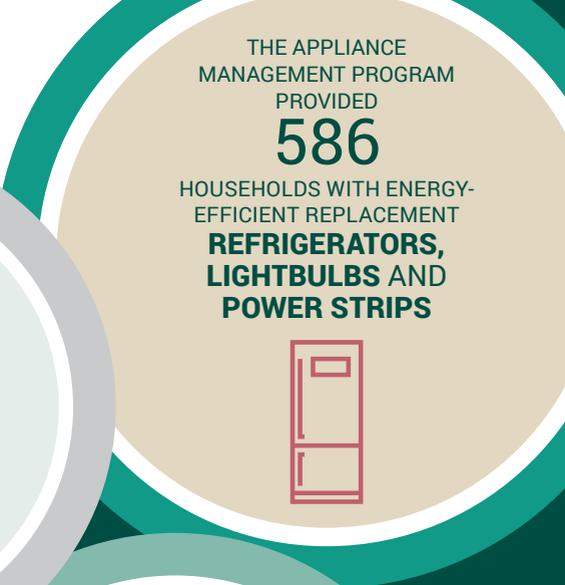
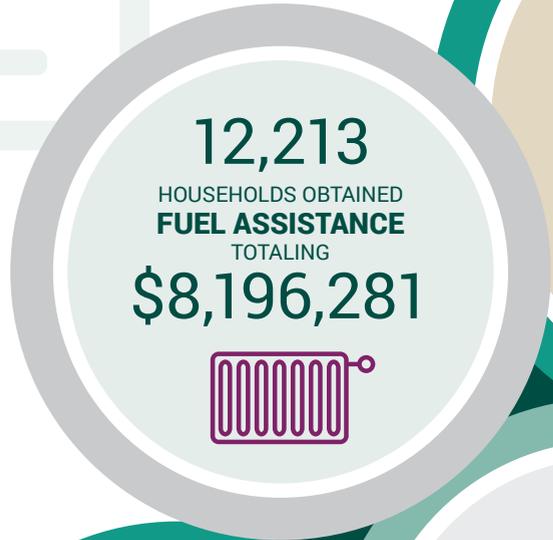
ENERGY ASSISTANCE

- » WCAC processed 14,370 applications for fuel assistance, including 1,933 first-time applicants.
- » 12,213 certified eligible households obtained fuel assistance benefits, totaling \$8,196,280.50, through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and distributed via 76 local vendors and utilities.
- » 39% of those households receiving fuel assistance were elderly; 15% were households with children under the age of six; 42% of households were either self-employed or otherwise earning wages; 68% of households were receiving Social Security or Disability.
- » WCAC's Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Program (HEARTWAP) provided 979 households with heating system repair, replacement or seasonal maintenance.

- » The Appliance Management Program (AMP), funded through National Grid, provided 586 households with efficient replacement lightbulbs, refrigerators, freezers and power strips, while promoting money saving energy education.
- » The U.S. Department of Energy and Utility funded Weatherization program provided 213 households with energy-saving insulation.
- » The MA Department of Energy Resources funded Pellet Stove Program allowed 50 households to supplement their heat with clean and efficient wood pellets, while reducing their carbon footprint.



FUEL



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

- » 16 youth completed the Job & Education Center's (JEC) Youth Employment Seminar, learning valuable pre and post-employment skills, such as writing and submitting a resume, workplace etiquette and a review of basic labor laws. As the result of participating in the work readiness training, 13 youth secured employment.
- » Utilizing a combination of public, private and state funding, 444 youth received subsidized employment at 75 worksites with public/private employment partners through the YouthWorks and Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative Summer Jobs Programs.
- » 31 youth were hired for non-subsidized, permanent posts by their employer at the conclusion of the seven-week summer jobs program.
- » Despite seeing students with greater needs and lower academic levels, and facing ever increasing educational standards, WCAC instructional staff supported 18 youth in successfully achieving their High School Equivalency Certificate (HiSET) through the Project

Excel or WINGS programs. Approximately 160 youth remain enrolled at varying levels of completion, working towards their HiSET and other work readiness credentials.

- » Between 400-500 youth walk through the JEC door annually. Some 225 tested and completed an application, but were referred to other agencies due to low test scores.
- » 25 individuals are enrolled in the agency's Secure Jobs Program, offering support and assistance in attaining living wages for homeless families.
- » 6 young men participating in the Safe & Successful Youth Initiative have secured employment.
- » 7 youth either enrolled in college or completed a career pathway certificate program.
- » JEC hosts events each year to engage alumni, position youth in leadership roles and to develop relationships with employer partners. An estimated 150 alumni remain connected to WCAC services.

DIPLOMA

444 YOUTH
RECEIVED SUBSIDIZED
EMPLOYMENT
THROUGH YOUTHWORKS



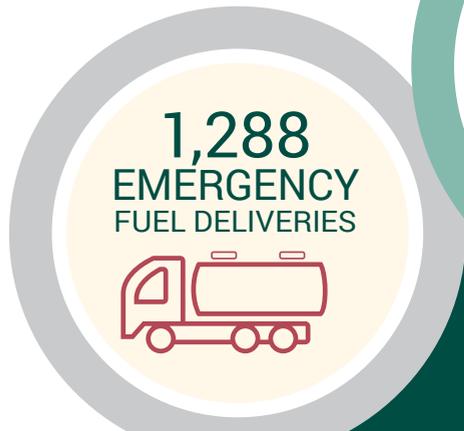
16 YOUTH
COMPLETED
THE **WORK-
READINESS**
PROGRAM



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

- » With changes in how the MA Department of Transitional Assistance processes Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), WCAC saw an increase in clients requesting applications in person. The agency processed 125 families' applications for food assistance.
- » 1,288 fuel deliveries were made to households facing no-heat emergencies, funded through generous private donations to the agency's fuel fund and in partnership with fuel providers.



ASSET DEVELOPMENT

- » 29 IRS-certified volunteers donated 620 hours to prepare income tax returns at no cost for 841 low income households, resulting in \$1,269,473 in returns.
- » City-wide, through the Worcester Free Tax Service Coalition, a total of \$3.4 million was returned to the local economy.
- » New partnerships were established with local financial institutions in order to strengthen financial literacy training within the agency's work readiness curriculum.



29 IRS-CERTIFIED
VOLUNTEERS

DONATED

620
HOURS



TO PREPARE



841
INCOME TAX
RETURNS
AT NO COST

RESULTING IN
\$1,269,473 IN RETURNS



WCAC'S HEAD START MARKS 25 YEARS

JUST CALL THEM SANDBOX

SWEETHEARTS. Pedro Aponte and Milissa Sagastibelza were among the very first youngsters enrolled in WCAC's Head Start program nearly 25 years ago, and are now happily married and the proud parents of one Head Start graduate with their younger daughter presently enrolled. Although not enrolled in WCAC's program at the same time due to a two year age difference, both have fond memories of their early preschool experience, particularly the opportunity to meet and learn with other children. For Milissa, in particular, the bilingual instruction was critical to ensuring her readiness for kindergarten.

The couple first enrolled their son in WCAC's program after relocating back to Massachusetts and finding themselves struggling to get on their feet. "Our son was eligible which was helpful as we were working to save up," Pedro recalls.

"We believe strongly that the Head Start program has had an impact on our son and daughter's growth," Milissa says. "The way they learn is fun and our son was completely ready to take on Kindergarten and furthermore, first grade. In Kindergarten, his teacher thought he was an extremely smart kid and we give a lot of credit for that to WCAC."

Following in his mother Wanda's footsteps, who was highly involved with the Head Start Policy Council during her time as a Head Start parent, Pedro is now also an active member of the Policy Council. "Although I didn't understand it at the time, my mother's involvement taught me structure and the importance of giving back," he says. "Being chairperson of the council has raised my self-esteem and improved my public speaking skills."

Milissa, who recently accepted the role of Treasurer for the Policy Council agreed, saying, "Being a part of Head Start has given our family a sense of pride to know you can build a better you while having fun. We love this program."

“ Being a part of Head Start has given our family a sense of pride to know you can build a better you while having fun. ”

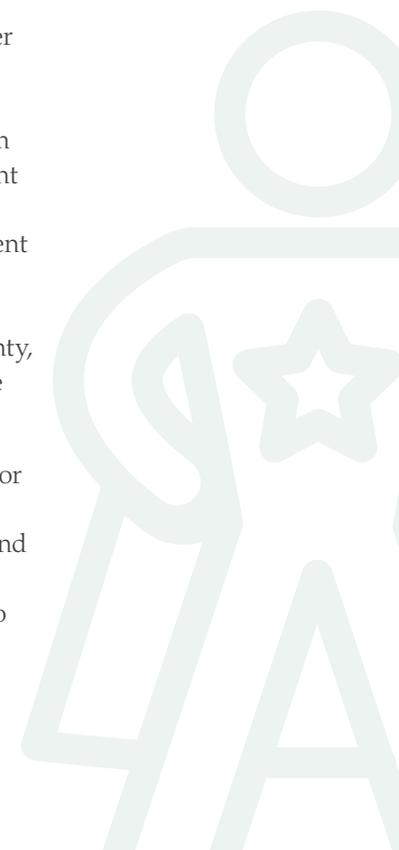




A DECADE OF ACTION HEROES

WCAC HOSTED ITS 10TH ANNUAL ACTION HERO CELEBRATION on May 25, 2016, with a standing room only crowd at the Beechwood Hotel. It was a reunion, of sorts, as a decade's worth of past Action Hero honorees joined this year's slate of winners, which included: Worcester City Manager Ed Augustus, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce President Timothy Murray, Worcester Interfaith Director Frank Kartheiser, United Way of Central Massachusetts President Tim Garvin, Southbridge Savings Bank, Southbridge Superintendent of Schools Barbara Malkas and State Representative Joseph McKenna. Whether advocating for enhancing youth employment opportunities, providing critical resources to support home heating needs for our most vulnerable residents, or supporting efforts to grow the agency's Head Start program in South County, WCAC is fortunate to count among its supporters so many true Action Heroes!

The occasion also allowed us to recognize our Executive Director Jill Dagilis' 10th anniversary with the agency – including the surprise presentation of her very own Action Hero caricature and green cape! Under Jill's direction, WCAC has strengthened its position as a leading provider for those in need, paving paths to self-sufficiency for all those who walk through our doors.



WCAC 10 YEAR SNAPSHOT

	2007	2016
Fuel Assistance Applications	11,429	14,370
Households provided fuel assistance	9,641	12,213
YouthWorks Summer Jobs placements	195	349
Youth employment partners	55	75
Households provided energy savings weatherization	250	979

WCAC TOTAL BUDGET 2007
\$13,049,674.19

WCAC TOTAL BUDGET 2016
\$19,192,293.29

STUDENT SUCCESS

CHRISTY KANG

Congratulations to Christy Kang – WCAC Job & Education Center student who earned her HiSET (formerly GED) diploma in July and celebrated in true WCAC tradition by adding her name to the agency’s graduate wall of fame. A single mom of three young boys, Christy was first referred to WCAC three years ago after a year of living in a local shelter. Despite lots of moving around and having been laid off, she says she was determined to finish for her kids. “Never give up, strive for what you want and know you can always do better even though you’re struggling – just keep moving forward,” she says. The second in her family to earn a HiSET, she is determined to be the first in her family to go to college – staying on a strong path to self-sufficiency for both herself and her sons.

“Never give up, strive for what you want and know you can always do better even though you’re struggling – just keep moving forward.”



STUDENT SUCCESS

CHRISTIAN OLIVO

When the stress of growing up in a single parent household became too much, Christian Olivo found himself depressed, a high school dropout and uncertain about his future. A friend referred him to WCAC's high school certificate and career pathways program, WINGS. "It was amazing – a lot more than I expected," he says. "The staff made everything easy and was committed to helping me make a better life for myself."

After earning his HiSET, Christian enrolled in WCAC's Youth Employment Seminar, a work readiness program covering everything from soft skills, to resume writing and mock interviews. "It was a great experience to get ready for the workforce," he recalls. Having expressed interest in a career in the field of banking or financial services,

Christian spent time volunteering with WCAC's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, before staff helped him secure an internship with AllCom Credit Union. "After two months they liked who I was and how I worked," he said. "On April 28, 2012 they hired me as a teller." Christian was honored at WCAC's 10th Annual Action Hero Celebration in May for his great success; Christian was recently promoted to a senior teller position at AllCom. He and his wife are now preparing to buy their first home together.

"If you are having a hard time finding your place, WCAC's doors are open. It is a welcome, friendly environment," Christian remembers fondly. "They do everything in their power – even after hours – to make sure you have a better and brighter future."

“ If you are having a hard time finding your place, WCAC's doors are open. It is a welcome, friendly environment. ”



2016 IN-KIND GOODS AND SERVICES

COAT DRIVE

Robert Borski
City of Worcester
Commerce Bank & Trust Company
Tom Dubay
Christine Fant
Family Services of Central
Massachusetts
Worcester Senior Center – Creative
Hands
National Grid
AllCom Credit Union
Donna McGrath
Knights of Columbus, Council
#13637
Anne O'Brien
Carrick O'Brien
Deborah Penta
Dr. Hari & Stacy Ravindranathan
Southbridge Savings Bank
Jeff Van Amburgh
Webster Five Cents Savings Bank

HEAD START

4 Imprint
CDC & Prevention
Carmen Colon

Jennifer Courtney
Christina Howard
Kaleidoscope Community
Missy Maldonado
MAPFRE Insurance
John Morrissey
Point Breeze Restaurant
Quill.com
Cynthia St. Germain
St. Joseph's Parish of Auburn
Southbridge Public Schools
Webster Public Schools
WGBH
You Inc., Southbridge

HEALTHY FAMILIES

Babies"R"Us
Jacki Checkile
Department of Transitional
Assistance
Dtour Enterprises
Flower Garden
Harrington Hospital Self-Wellness
Program
Harrington Hospital/Childbirth
Education
Healthy Baby Essentials

Jacki Checkile
Jacob Edwards Library
Kennedy Donovan Center
Kids Unlimited
Mead Johnson Nutrition
New Hope, Inc.
Pregnant & Parenting Teen
Program
South Bay Mental Health
South Central WIC
South County Community
Partnership
Southbridge Family Health Center
St. Joseph's Catholic Church

JOB & EDUCATION CENTER

AllCom Credit Union
Jessica Caouette
Cooking Matters
DeJongh "Dee" Wells
Dress for Success Worcester
Integral Resources
MassEdCO
Mastermans
Ramon Borges-Mendez
Mirick O'Connell Attorneys at Law

Planting the Seed Foundation
Price Chopper Supermarket
Quinsigamond Community
College
Laurie Ross
Rutland Public Library
Workforce Central Career Center

YOUTHWORKS

City of Worcester
Lincoln Village
Regional Environmental Council
Securitas
UMass Medical School
UMass Memorial

AGENCY WIDE

Curry Printing
DCU Center
Holy Cross Baseball
Music Worcester, Inc.
The Hanover Theatre
for the Performing Arts
PENTA Communications,
Inc.
Volunteer Income Tax
Assistance Volunteers
Worcester Business Journal

Special thanks to WCAC's Board
of Directors for their time and
commitment to the agency over
the past fiscal year.



FY2016 ANNUAL APPEAL DONORS

SUPPORTING MEMBERS:

\$1 – \$99

Lawrence & Gloria Abramoff
Wendy Antonopoulos
Pedro & Milissa Aponte
Rich & Wendy Ardizzone
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John Benoit
Bob Blackman
Snjezana Bosnjak
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Jodi Casselman
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Gladys Rodriguez-Parker
Yvette Serrano
Mr. & Mrs. Antonio Simas
Linda Taylor
George Tetler
My To
Susan Torres
Pamela Turner
Liberty Insulation
Peerless Financial Solutions, Inc.

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\$100 – \$299

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Dr. Dorothea Simmons
In Honor of Steve Joseph
Howard Stempler
Webster Five
Susan & Alan Tubman
Margo & Francisco Valdes
Wanda Wachira
Steven J. Ward
Don & Norah Xenos

CHAMPIONS: \$300 – \$500

Kerry Brennan
Steve & Michele Desmarais
Christine Fant
Warner & Mary Fletcher
Steve & Lee Joseph
Joyce & Michael Keegan
Mary & Robert Knittle
Ann Lisi & Joel Greene
Unum Matching Gift Program
Sue Mailman & James Chapdelaine
Jonathan & Lisa Sigel Charitable Fund
Amy & Brian Westerlind
Judith Whittle

LEADERS: \$501+

Hanover Insurance Group Foundation
Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts
Jill & Paul Dagilis
Ann DeBiasio
Kathleen G. Johnson
Middlesex Cooling, Inc.
National Grid
Susan Mais
William & Anne Van Dam

FY2016 PRIVATE GRANTS & DONATIONS

10TH ANNUAL ACTION HEROES CELEBRATION

AllCom Credit Union
Anna Maria College
Bay State Savings Bank
Big Bunny Market
Bollus Lynch
Bowditch & Dewey
Coghlin Electric
Dexter-Russell, Inc.
Eastern Insurance
Eversource
F.W. Madigan Company, Inc.
Fallon Community Health Plan
Fidelity Bank
Imperial Distributors
Massachusetts Port Authority
Mutual of America
National Grid
Northeast Utilities
Polar Beverages
Providence & Worcester Railroad Company
Reliant Medical Group
RSC Insurance Brokerage
St. Gobain
UMass Medical School

UMass Memorial Health Care, Inc.
United Bank Foundation
Unum
Webster Five
Worcester Business Development Corporation
Worcester State University

COAT DRIVE

Bay State Savings Bank
DCU For Kids
Dr. & Mrs. Satya Mitra
Harris Auto Body
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
Mark Petniunas
UniBank
Worcester Rotary Club
Worcester State University Student Council

FUEL ASSISTANCE

Administrative Officer's Association
AP Critical Care
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Peter Bagley
James R. Buonomo & Paula Rowse Buonomo Fund
Quinsigamond Village Clergy Association

Shawn Cody
Aimee Desmarais
Gretchen & Richard Ellison III
Timothy Emhoff
Michelle Fernald
Cynthia French
Gina Giangregorio
Stephen Heard
Luanne Hills
Lee Hoffman
Dr. Richard Irwin
Cheryl & Joseph Lapriore
Dr. Craig Lilly
Gurudev Lotun
In memory of Diane MacConnell
Dr. J. Mark Madison
Virginia Mason
Kathleen Menard
J. Daniel & Susanne Muehlschlegel
Mirick O'Connell
Dr. Marie Mullen
National Grid
Mark & Catherine Pianka
Teresa Rincon
Melissa Ryzewski
Southbridge Savings Bank
Bruce & Nancy Simon

Nicholas & Roxanne Smyrnios
Debra Svec

HEAD START

Eliza D. & Cora J. D. Dodge Fund

HEALTHY FAMILIES OF SOUTHERN WORCESTER COUNTY

Fallon Health
Harrington Memorial Hospital

JOB & EDUCATION CENTER

Bank of America
Catholic Campaign for Human Development
Commerce Bank
District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.
Greater Worcester Community Foundation Youth Opportunity Fund
David LeBlanc
UNUM
Wyman Gordon

UNRESTRICTED

Bank of America
Community Action Partnership
Digital Federal Credit Union
George I. Alden Trust
In Memory of Alice Baab
Mary DeFeudis
Melvin S. Cutler Charitable Foundation
Worcester Business Journal



FINANCIALS 2016*

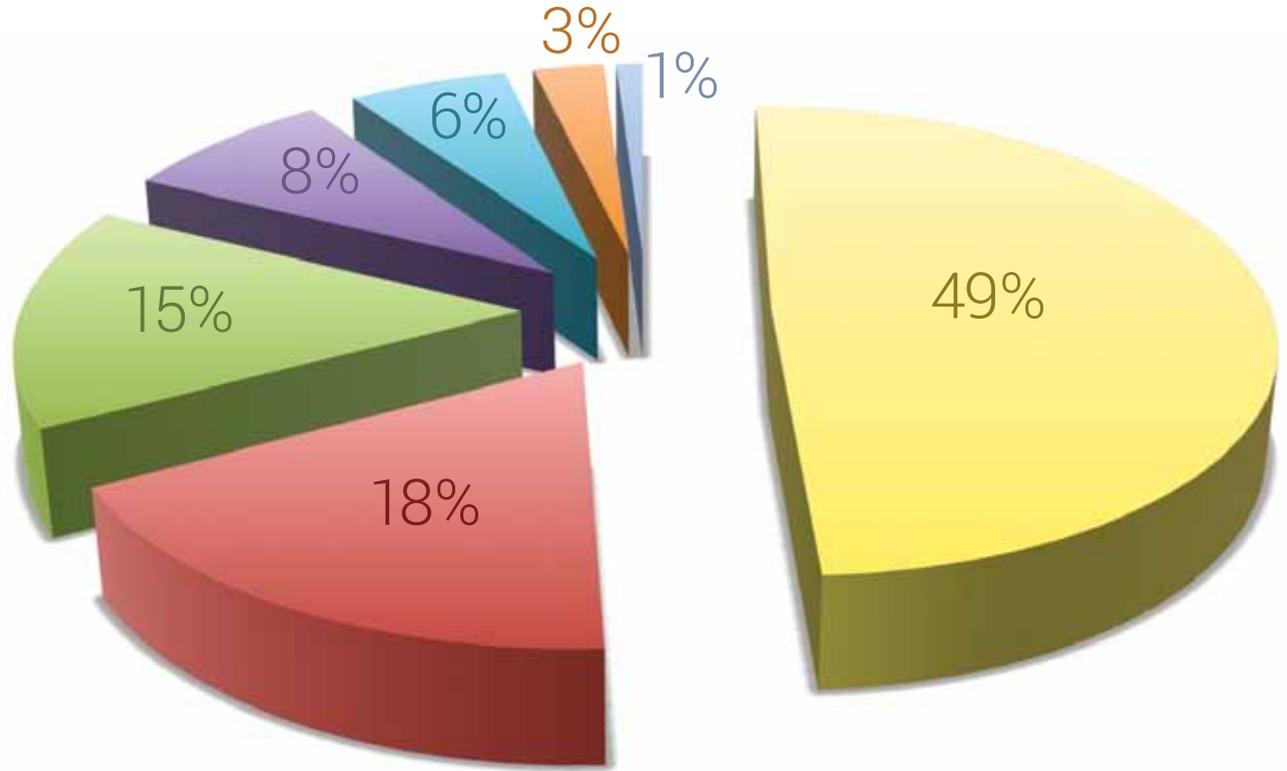
SOURCES OF FUNDS

Commonwealth of MA	\$11,912,502.00
Earned Revenue Fees	\$2,566,663.75
Federal Funding – Direct	\$2,436,085.00
City of Worcester – Pass Through	\$913,341.77
In-Kind Contributions	\$491,310.06
The Children’s Trust Fund	\$309,549.00
Corporate, Foundation & Private Grants	\$261,259.42
United Way	\$205,012.00
Individual Donations	\$30,240.29
Service Contracts – Other Agencies	\$28,073.00
Local Government	\$22,601.00
Other Income	\$15,656.00
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS	\$19,192,293.29

**Unaudited Financial Statement
WCAC's fiscal year is October 1 to September 30.*

USE OF FUNDS

Fuel Assistance	\$9,330,028.08
Weatherization/ Energy Conservation	\$3,401,959.03
Head Start	\$2,892,842.49
Job & Education Center	\$1,482,692.27
Administration & Fundraising	\$1,322,582.82
Healthy Families	\$505,081.01
Other Programs	\$72,069.60
TOTAL USE OF FUNDS	\$19,007,255.30



Serving the City of Worcester and 45 neighboring communities: Auburn, Blackstone, Boylston, Brimfield, Brookfield, Charlton, Clinton, Douglas, Dudley, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holden, Holland, Hopedale, Hubbardston, Grafton, Leicester, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Northborough, Northbridge, Palmer, Oakham, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Shrewsbury, Southbridge, Spencer, Sterling, Sturbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, Wales, Warren, Webster, West Boylston, West Brookfield, and Westborough.

USE OF FUNDS





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U.S. Postage
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Permit #261

Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.

Denholm Building
484 Main Street, Suite 200
Worcester, MA 01608

THE ANTIPOVERTY AGENCY FOR
CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

www.wcac.net
Phone 508.754.1176
Fax 508.754.0203



WORCESTER COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL INC.'S MISSION IS "HELPING PEOPLE MOVE TO ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH PROGRAMS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND ADVOCACY."