

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*



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Steven Joseph, *Chairman*  
Noreen Johnson-Smith, *Vice Chair*  
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Donald Xenos, *Treasurer*  
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Gladys Rodriguez-Parker  
Brian Westerlind

# 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

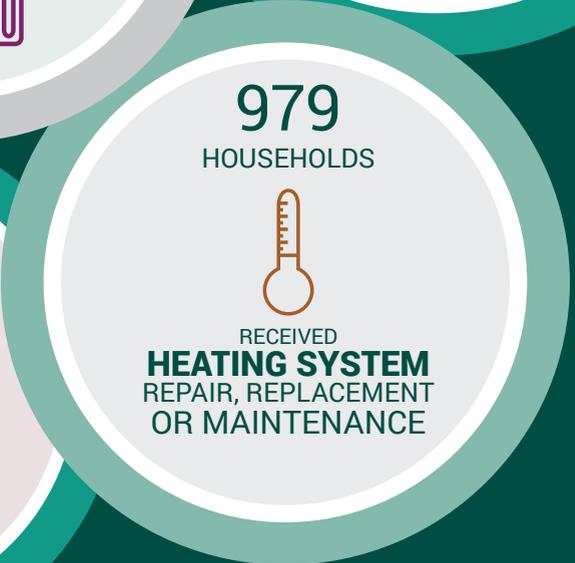
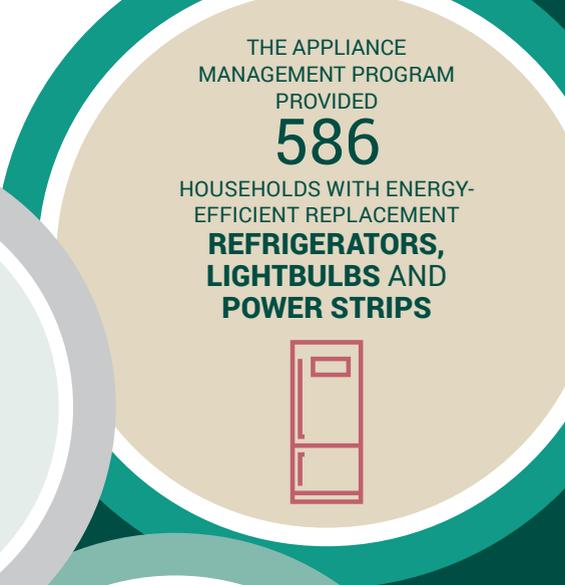
# FUEL

## 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.



# 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.



## 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."

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“ 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. ”

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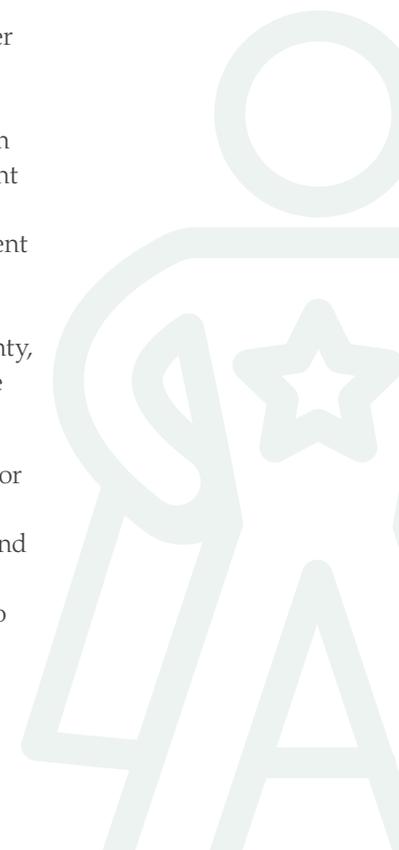




## A DECADE OF ACTION HEROES

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
<hr/>		
<b>WCAC TOTAL BUDGET 2007</b>		
<b>\$13,049,674.19</b>		
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<b>WCAC TOTAL BUDGET 2016</b>		
<b>\$19,192,293.29</b>		

## 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."

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

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# 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  
Leslie Baker  
John Benoit  
Bob Blackman  
Snjezana Bosnjak  
Donna Bunker-Swanstrom  
Karen Carlson  
Charles & Deb Cary  
Jodi Casselman  
Elice Chiapulis  
Michael Crawford  
Mary Louise Doherty  
Hassett & Donnelly, P.C.  
Tom Dubay  
Catherine & Peter Fellenz  
Lisa Hickman  
S&ra Hollingsworth  
Priscilla Holmes  
Robert Jennings  
Jolene Jennings  
Grazyna LaFrance

Flavia Laza  
Rodney & Doris Lee  
Patsy Lewis  
Rosanne Matulaitis  
Marcia & Michael Mills  
Denise Morrell  
Dr. Leonard & Maxine Morse  
Margaret O'Connor  
Charlotte Operach  
Radames Pagan  
Tammy Parella  
Yung Phan  
Brenda Polleys  
Marjorie Purves  
In Honor of Jill Dagilis  
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.

### FOUNDING MEMBERS:

\$100 – \$299

AAA Northeast  
Dale Allen & Meredith Galena  
Frances Anthes & Charles Washburn  
Community Networks Corporation  
William Carrick  
Christine Consolmagno  
Hon. John J. Conte  
Kathryn & Lawrence Crockett  
Dix & Sarah Davis  
Kathleen Dow  
Francis Ford & Shirley Doyle  
Ellen M. Ganley  
Francis George  
Ecotec, Inc.  
EJT Siding & Custom Exterior  
Avidia Bank  
Noar's Enterprises, Inc.  
Joanne Gravell  
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Barbara Haller  
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Eleanor Lin  
Peter Martin  
Martinetty General Contractor Inc.  
Mastermans  
Donna McGrath  
Millbury Federal Credit Union  
Robert Morrison, Jr.  
Mayra Nieves  
Beryl Notargiacomo  
Carrick O'Brien  
Anne O'Brien  
Michelle Ramirez  
Mary Lou Retelle  
Joanne Rice  
Anais Rubio  
J. Robert Seder  
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\*

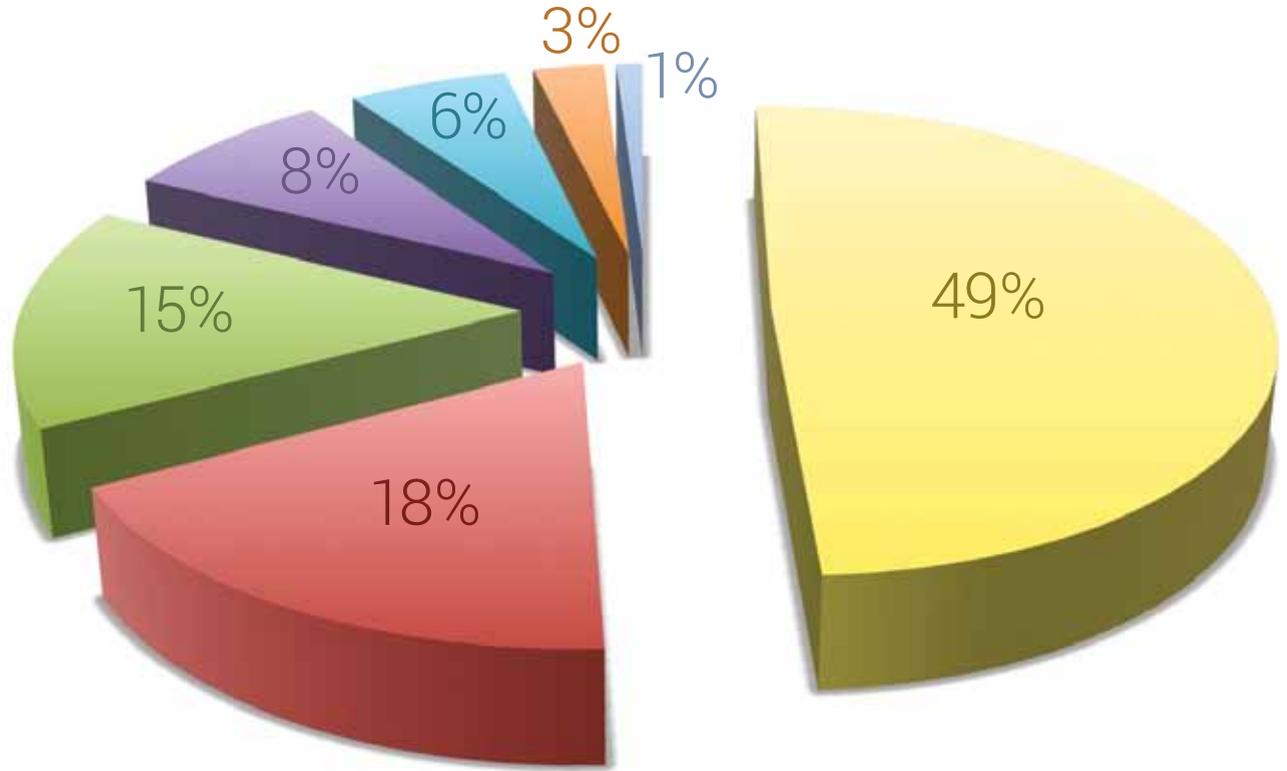
### SOURCES OF FUNDS

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
<b>TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS</b>	<b>\$19,192,293.29</b>

*\*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
<b>TOTAL USE OF FUNDS</b>	<b>\$19,007,255.30</b>



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





Non-profit  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Worcester, MA  
Permit #261

**Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.**  
Denholm Building  
484 Main Street, Suite 200  
Worcester, MA 01608

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THE ANTIPOVERTY AGENCY FOR  
CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

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**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."