

# WORCESTER



**ACTION COUNCIL, INC.**

Community Services Block Grant  
Community Action Plan

Fiscal Year 2015-2017



# WORCESTER COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL, INC.

The Antipoverty Agency for Central Massachusetts

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Jill C. Dagilis

July 21, 2014

Mr. Gerald Bell, Manager of Community Services Programs  
Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300.  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Bell:

On behalf of the Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.'s (WCAC) Board of Directors and staff, I am excited to provide you with the agency's three-year Community Action Plan for FY 2015-2017!

WCAC's FY 2014 Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding—\$585,623, representing less than 2.75% of the total agency budget—leveraged \$19.5M in program funding from federal, state, local, and private funding sources to deliver 15 programs in education and employment, family and youth development, asset development, and energy assistance to 75,000 income-limited households in Worcester and 44 towns! Nationally and locally, we celebrate our legacy of 50 years; yet, each day we are reminded that there is still much work to be done to reduce poverty. We continue the hard work to wage war on poverty that President Lyndon B. Johnson fought to eradicate.

WCAC's 2014 theme is *Future Focused!* The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary marks a significant time in the history of Community Action Agencies: now, more than ever, is the time to move beyond charity to community empowerment. WCAC is committed to excellence, best practices, and accountability for all of our staff, programs, policies, and procedures to ensure that our vulnerable customers receive valuable services that help them move to economic self-sufficiency.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our staff, volunteers, and Board leaders for the support they have given WCAC over the past several years. We also recognize our elected officials and give special thanks to Congressman James P. McGovern who has been our staunch advocate for supporting thousands of our customers through the agency's asset development programs including SNAP, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and financial education.

WCAC is eager to participate with MASSCAP and all of the Commonwealth's community action agencies to integrate the new National Standards and ROMA into the three-year community action plan, as it aligns with the Department of Housing and Community Development's statewide plan. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

Jill C. Dagilis  
Executive Director

William A. Van Dam  
Board Chairman



"Helping people move to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships, and advocacy."

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. MISSION STATEMENT ..... 2

II. COMMUNITY PROFILE..... 2

III. PLANNING PROCESS ..... 11

IV. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT..... 12

    a. METHODOLOGY..... 12

    b. RESULTS ..... 13

V. INTERNAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT ..... 14

    a. METHODOLOGY..... 14

    b. RESULTS ..... 15

VI. SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM..... 17

VII. LINKAGES ..... 19

VIII. EVALUATION OF NATIONAL GOALS AND INDICATORS AND AGENCY  
    OUTCOMES ..... 21

IX. THREE-YEAR FUNDING STRATEGY ..... 28

X. VISION STATEMENT ..... 31

XI. CONCLUSION..... 33

**Appendices:**

- A. Works Cited
- B. WCAC Service Area & Maps
- C. Selected Census Data for WCAC Service Area
- D. Client Survey Instrument (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic)
- E. Client Survey Results
- F. Staff Survey Instrument
- G. Staff Survey Results
- H. Focus Group Minutes
- I. Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

**I. MISSION STATEMENT**

*“Helping people move to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships, and advocacy.”*

The mission statement for Worcester Community Action Agency (WCAC) was reviewed at the WCAC Board meeting held on June 16, 2014. Discussion started with the suggestion that the statement be shortened to “Helping people move to economic self-sufficiency.” It then turned to the issue of whether the terms ‘economic self-sufficiency’ adequately describes the scope and impact of WCAC’s programs and activities. It was agreed that the topic needed to be given more time for discussion at a subsequent Board meeting and no changes were made.

**II. COMMUNITY PROFILE**

**Regional Characteristics**

The Community Service Block Grant designated service area for WCAC is limited to the City of Worcester; however several of WCAC’s programs serve residents in 44 surrounding towns including: Auburn, Blackstone, Boylston, Brimfield, Brookfield, Charlton, Clinton, Douglas, Dudley, East Brookfield, Grafton, Hardwick, Holden, Holland, Hopedale, Leicester, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Northborough, Northbridge, Oakham, Oxford, Palmer, Paxton, Rutland, Shrewsbury, Southbridge, Spencer, Sterling, Sturbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, Wales, Warren, Webster, West Boylston, West Brookfield, and Westborough. Selected census data for all of the towns served by WCAC’s programs, including population demographics, as well as poverty, employment and educational attainment rates, is located in Appendix C.

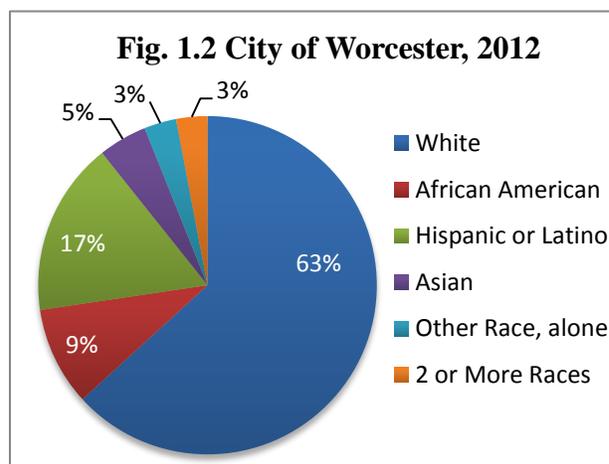
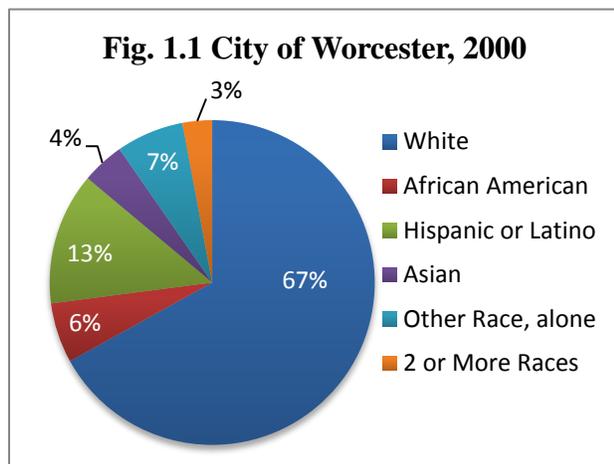
The Central Massachusetts region is unique in that it hosts a large urban core surrounded by many small towns and rural farming communities. Worcester is the second largest city in New England, yet 54% of towns in WCAC’s service area have a population under 10,000. Worcester, known as the ‘Heart of the Commonwealth,’ is centrally located 50 to 60 miles from the major urban areas of Boston, Springfield, Providence, and Hartford. The city boasts many cultural gems including: the Worcester Art Museum, Hanover Theatre, Union Station, City Hall and the Common, Clark University’s Holocaust Museum, Mechanic’s Hall, Tuckerman Hall and Elm Park- known as the oldest municipal park in the country. Worcester’s diverse population provides residents with a vibrant and active culture including hundreds of local eateries and artistic and community events.

**Demographics**

In the last decade, Central Massachusetts has experienced the largest population growth in the state in growth rate as well as total numerical increase. Worcester’s population increased five percent between 2000 and 2010, exceeding the increase for Boston (4.6%), and the state overall (3.3%). Sixty-eight percent of communities in the region have seen double-digit increases in population since 1990. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC)

projects that the region will continue to grow 15% from 2010-2035, though the annualized growth rate is predicted to slow to 0.2% per year. The City of Worcester is projected to increase population 12.68% by 2035, up to 204,010 people total.

Between 2000 and 2012, the region experienced a substantial change in racial and ethnic diversity. Though the majority of the region’s residents remain white, the non-Hispanic white population decreased by 3.4% while the Hispanic/Latino population increased 39%, the African American population increased 73%, and the Asian population increased 20% between 2000 and 2012 (Figure 1.1 and 1.2).



The influx of new immigrants is a key factor of growth in the region. The immigrant population increased at an annual rate of 3.7% during the last decade, exceeding the rates in Massachusetts and the United States during the same time period. According to a Worcester Research Bureau report released in February, 2013, the largest numbers of immigrants in Worcester are from Brazil, Vietnam and Ghana. A significant number of families are also arriving from: Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Congo, Central Africa Republic, Somalia and Sudan. The Family Health Center of Worcester, which primarily serves low-income patients, reported that in 2013, 42% of all Health Center patients were best served in a language other than English.

In addition, the Central Massachusetts region continues to attract a steady stream of young families in their later twenties and early thirties. Worcester has the third highest population of 20 to 34 year olds of all the major cities in New England. There are more than 36,000 students enrolled in higher education in the Greater Worcester Region. The Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts includes the following members: Anna Maria College, Assumption College, Becker College, Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science, Nichols College, Quinsigamond Community College, Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Worcester State University, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester State University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute. The region’s growth in two and four-year institutions surpassed the state rate over the last decade; and the estimated economic benefit of colleges and universities to the area is \$2.5 billion. However, as suggested by the net negative out-migration among those in their early

twenties, Worcester is not retaining its most recent graduates. This presents a challenge for the region as it gives up a young, well-educated workforce who could spur scientific and entrepreneurial innovations and support the local economy overall.

## Income

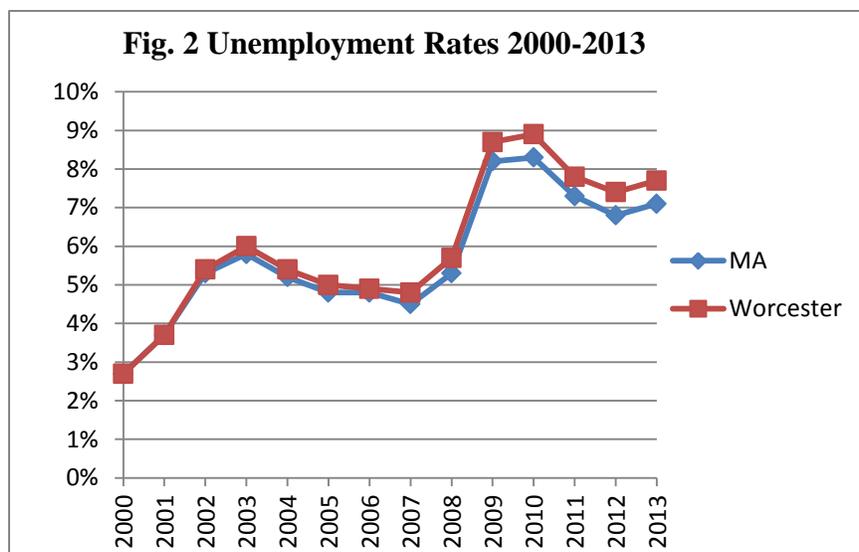
Income inequality is a persistent issue for many residents of Central Massachusetts. The chart below shows the five towns in WCAC's service area with the highest individual, childhood and family poverty rates. The City of Worcester ranks highest in all three areas for the region, followed closely by Southbridge. Worcester has significantly higher individual and child poverty rates as compared with the statewide figures, and nearly one-third of all youth in Worcester live in poverty. There are also substantial disparities within the region in terms of median household income. Upton boasts the highest median household income at \$115,625, which is almost 154% higher than Worcester's at \$45,679.

	<b>Individual Poverty Rate</b>	<b>Childhood Poverty Rate</b>	<b>Family Poverty Rate</b>
<b>Hardwick</b>	15.9%	22.2%	15.3%
<b>Palmer</b>	10.3%	9.8%	6.3%
<b>Southbridge</b>	16.1%	23.3%	12.9%
<b>Webster</b>	14.0%	21.3%	11.3%
<b>Worcester</b>	20.1%	29.0%	16.0%
<b>Worcester County</b>	11.8%	15.1%	10.7%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	11.9%	15.4%	11.5%

## Employment

Historically, the Central Massachusetts region was a center for agriculture, manufacturing and education. In recent decades, the agriculture and manufacturing industries have significantly declined. However, high-tech and biotech firms have moved into the region and health care systems are prominent employers. Four industries now represent nearly 50% of all employment in the region: Health Care, Education, Retail and Manufacturing. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the largest employment growth in Worcester was in the fields of education and health services, a total increase of 19.73% or 7,138 jobs. Worcester has 1.39 times the per capita number of employees in those fields compared with the national average. The average real weekly wage in the Education and Health Services sector has grown nine percent between 2001 and 2011.

While the City of Worcester's unemployment figures have fallen since 2010, the unemployment rate in the city has remained higher than the state's through most of the 2000s, as shown in Figure 2 (below). Due to the ongoing economic recession, the CMRPC predicts that it could be several more years before employment numbers climb back up to the 2005 level.



According to Jeffrey Turgeon, Executive Director of the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB), Worcester faces several challenges in the development of the region’s workforce. First is the increasing number of recent immigrants and new Americans with limited English skills. According to the 2012 American Community Survey, 33.9% of Worcester residents speak a language other than English, and 52.1% of those residents speak English less than ‘very well.’ The need for English language education is also apparent in the public school system, in which 31.6% of students are classified as ‘limited English proficiency,’ which is considerably higher than the overall state figure of 7.3%.

Two age groups- young adults and older workers- have faced great challenges in finding work since the 2008 recession. Experienced, middle-age workers struggle to find jobs with pay comparable to their pre-recession positions. Companies still recovering from the recession are reluctant to hire these workers since they expect higher salaries. Youth in Worcester represent only 13.1% of the workforce but account for 24.8% of the unemployed in the region. The unemployment rate is highest for those specifically between the ages of 16 and 18 at 26.3%. According to a Labor and Workforce Development report from 2012, creating strategies to increase youth employment should remain a top priority for the region. Suggested strategies from the report include creating pipelines between local school districts and colleges and universities in the region to increase the number of workers with associate’s degrees or higher, and providing early employment opportunities and workforce readiness training for young people.

**Education**

Overall, educational attainment levels in Worcester are lower than that of the state and over 44% of Worcester residents have only a high school diploma or less, compared with 36.8% of Massachusetts residents. Despite the large number of colleges and universities in the area, only 29.8% of Worcester’s residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared with 39% of Massachusetts residents.

The Worcester Public School District has a total of 45 schools: 34 elementary schools, four middle/junior high schools, and seven secondary schools. Total enrollment for the 2012-2013 school year was 24,740 students and there has been a 4.5% increase in enrollment since 2010. Although Worcester is the second largest city in Massachusetts, it is ranked third for the number of students enrolled in traditional public schools, after Boston and Springfield. Approximately 10.5% of students in the city are enrolled in private school. Worcester’s public schools are ranked from Level 1 (highest performing) to Level 5 (school is placed into receivership). As of 2014, 57% of Worcester’s schools were ranked Level 3 and 4, indicating they are poorly performing schools with low achievement rates.

The charts below show a comparison between the Worcester Public School District and Massachusetts’ public schools for the 2012-2013 school year, and selected indicators are highlighted in green. A major challenge for the Worcester Public School District is the high percentage of students classified as *high needs*, meaning they belong to at least one of the following individual subgroups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) or former ELL, or low income students (eligible for free/reduced price school lunch).

**Demographics\***

	School District of Worcester	Massachusetts
White	35.8%	66.0%
African American	14.2%	8.6%
Asian	8.1%	5.9%
Hispanic	38.1%	16.4%
Native American	0.3%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3.5%	2.7%

**Selected Characteristics\***

	School District of Worcester	Massachusetts
Average Class Size	16.3	18.2
Total Number of Students	24,891	961,788
Limited English Proficiency	32.0%	7.6%
Special Education	19.9%	16.8%
Low Income	73.1%	37.0%
First Language Not English	44.0%	17.3%
English Language Learner	34.3%	7.7%
Free School Lunch	66.8%	32.1%
Reduced Price School Lunch	6.3%	4.9%
High Needs	81.7%	47.9%
Annual Drop-out Rate	4.1%	2.5%
Four-year Graduation Rate	72.3%	84.7%

\*Collected on: 1/31/2014 From: School and District Profiles: MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education (2012-2013); <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/students/classsizebygenderpopulation.aspx?orgcode=03480000&fycode=2011&orgtypecode=5&>

Additionally, Latino students particularly struggle in Worcester schools, according to a 2011 report commissioned by former Worcester Mayor Joseph O'Brien. Latino students make up 86% of those receiving free or reduced price lunch, and they represent the largest percentage of drop-outs in the district. Latino students receive a disproportionately high percentage of out-of-school suspensions in Worcester (15.1%) compared with 10.5% of Latino students in the state. Over one-third of Latino students in Worcester's public schools are not expected to graduate.

## **Transportation**

Worcester sits at the transportation crossroads for New England and includes junctions of four major interstate highways and three major railroads. The region is well connected by rail and highway to the ports, airports, and intermodal facilities of Boston and Providence. Descriptions of the major transportation characteristics for the region can be found below.

The CMRPC's 2012 Regional Transportation Plan highlights the increasing need for highway infrastructure improvements as well as expanded public transit via bus and trains. As of 2000, more than 20% of workers residing in Central Massachusetts commuted to jobs outside the region in Eastern Massachusetts. In addition, the number of workers leaving the region daily for jobs elsewhere is nearly double the number coming in from other regions. While these figures are a decade old, the CMRPC predicts that updated information available next year will show similar figures. This trend puts significant pressure on the region's roadways and the statistics show that more people are driving more miles than ever before. The CMRPC's report suggests that in addition to making critical roadway improvements, communities in the region should promote the increase of public transit capacity at the regional, inter-regional and interstate levels and should involve public and private entities in this effort.

### Highway

Worcester is easily accessible by driving. Interstate 290 crosses the city in a north-south direction and connects 12 miles to the northeast with Interstate 495, which is the second loop around the Boston Metro area. To the south it connects with the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90), a main route directly connecting Worcester to Boston. Interstate 190 also intersects I-290, which leads to Route 2 and the Leominster/Fitchburg area to the north. Route 146 traverses the city through the south-southeast side connecting Worcester to Providence, RI.

### Rail

Amtrak provides direct passenger rail service from Worcester to Boston, Springfield, and Providence. Conrail, the Providence & Worcester Railroad, and the Springfield Terminal Railway (STRR) all provide freight service and interchange traffic in Worcester. Conrail and the Providence & Worcester Railroad operate large intermodal (container and trailer) terminals in the city. They also have rail/truck transfer facilities for bulk products.

Bus

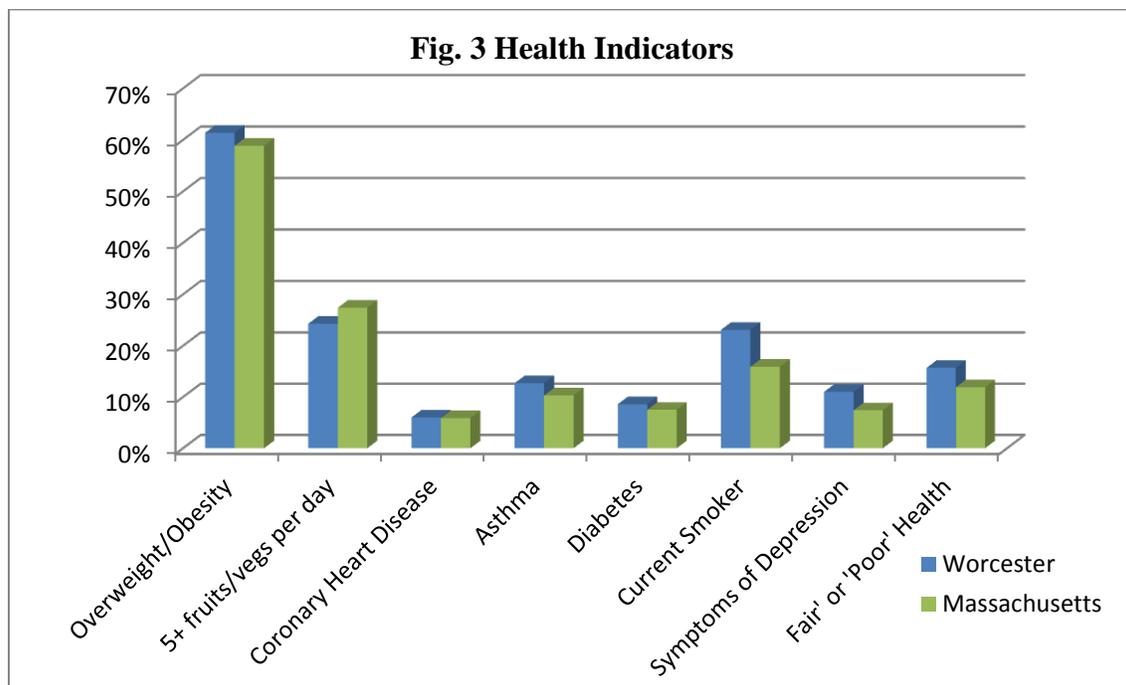
Worcester is a member of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA), which provides service to Worcester and 12 surrounding communities with 28 fixed routes. The WRTA also offers para-transit services for the elderly and disabled to 37 communities in the region. Peter Pan Bus Lines provides service from Worcester to Boston and points between. Peter Pan connects Worcester directly to Providence and, via Providence, to Cape Cod and also offers transportation to Logan Airport from Worcester seven days a week.

Airport

The Worcester Regional Airport is located three miles west of the center of the city. Worcester Regional Airport resumed commercial service after two years, when Jet Blue began offering two flights a day, seven days a week starting in November 2013. The expansion of Jet Blue services from Worcester to Florida is estimated to contribute approximately \$167 million of total economic input and 125 construction jobs with \$70 million in payroll over the next 10 years, according to a report from the Massachusetts Port Authority. It is also estimated that Worcester Airport will serve approximately 500,000 passengers annually by 2023.

Health

According to data from the Greater Worcester Region Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), released in December 2013, Worcester residents are more likely to report poor physical and mental health (Figure 3). Overall they experience higher rates of overweight/obesity, asthma, diabetes, and smoking than Massachusetts residents. Worcester adults have also reported lower rates of consumption of fruits and vegetables and regular physical activity compared with the state.



According to the same CHIP report, interviews with surveyed community members indicated “a perception that health care services in the area are of excellent quality and high in number” but identified several **major challenges related to access** for more vulnerable populations including:

- Transportation limitations
- Long waiting lists to get an appointment
- Long wait times when at the health facility
- Complexities navigating the health system
- Cultural competency of providers and office staff
- Lack of coordination of care for low-income residents

In addition, respondents described **structural factors** that contributed to challenges in accessing health services:

- Insufficient number of providers practicing primary care
- Conflict between business hours during which health facilities are open and the work schedules of vulnerable populations seeking care
- Inadequate public transportation

## **Crime**

Crime rates in the city increased over the last year; however, compared to other comparably sized cities, Worcester has relatively low crime rates and shows an overall decrease in crime during the past decade. Between 2012 and 2013, property crime rates in the city- including breaking and entering, motor vehicle theft, and larceny from motor vehicle vandalism- have decreased. While murders have remained consistent between 2012 and 2013, felony assaults increased slightly, non-fatal shootings increased by 50%, stabbings increased by 22% and robberies rose 16%. Gangs remain the root cause of much of the gun violence and murders in Worcester.

A major challenge fighting crime in the city is the relatively low staffing levels for the police force that have not yet returned to pre-recession figures. Before the economic downturn, there were 382 uniformed officers in Worcester. As of last summer, even with a new class of recruits entering the force, the total police force is 364 officers. With limited person-power and funding, Worcester’s police force has focused on a target-specific approach to combat crime, paying close attention to areas where crimes are occurring that can ultimately lead to murder, such as non-fatal shootings and stabbings. In a January 2014 interview in the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, Worcester Police Chief Gary Gemme expressed his optimism about the city’s progress fighting crime.

## **Special Consideration for Southbridge**

WCAC continues to raise the alarm of the significant poverty trends in the southern part of Worcester County. High unemployment, poverty, and child poverty rates, increasing health disparities, large Hispanic and elderly populations, along with a lack of transportation and low graduation rates are strong indicators of a community in need of basic services. In the upcoming

year, WCAC will work to secure additional resources to better serve the community and continue to advocate for expanding its designated service area to include Southbridge.

Southbridge is one of the most economically depressed communities in Massachusetts and its poverty rate (16.1%) is well above the state's (11.6%) and second only to Worcester (20.1%) for the Central Massachusetts region. The town's average per capita income is more than 10% below the Commonwealth. The unemployment rate for the town is 11%, much higher than the state's at 6.7%. While manufacturing is still one of the largest sectors of Southbridge's employment, the town has suffered from a loss of jobs in this industry, especially since the 1984 closing of the American Optical Company, once the largest manufacturer of ophthalmic products in the world. While it has lost manufacturing, retail, and professional and business services jobs, employment in the health care, education, and social assistance industries have increased, adding 470 jobs between 2001 and 2011.

Southbridge demonstrates a strong need to improve the workforce in the region. Among residents 25 years and older, only 77.8% have a high school diploma or higher, compared with the state average of 88.5%. While that may not appear to be a significant difference, only 12% of residents age 25 or older have a Bachelor's or advanced college degree, while the state average is 33.2%. In addition, about one-third of residents are Spanish-speaking and one-third of these are considered "linguistically isolated." Approximately 12% of students in the public school system are English language learners, compared with 7.9% in the state. These figures indicate a need for better access to higher education, expanded opportunities for workforce training, adult literacy courses, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses.

A July cover story in the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* reported that manufacturing jobs are still available in Southbridge, but local residents are often unprepared to fill them. The Central Massachusetts South Chamber of Commerce recently coordinated a two-week training program led by a project manager from the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Worcester. The program sought qualified applicants to learn math for manufacturing shop floors, blueprint reading, and measurement tools. The program achieved mixed results- only seven of the 31 people offered spots in the program made it to the end- but those who finished received job offers. Two participants were quickly hired by James Waddick, Vice President of United Lens Co. Inc. The article highlights the need to create a pipeline of future workers in partnership with employers and industry officials and work specifically to attract young workers into the field of manufacturing.

Southbridge is also facing an increasing need for social services for seniors and young children in the region. The senior population is expected to increase from 2,296 in 2010 to 4,380 in 2030. The influx of seniors could create more demand for public transportation and fuel assistance in the area. In addition, Southbridge ranks ninth out of 351 communities in Massachusetts for its child poverty rate (23.3%). Southbridge was ranked in the top-five "at-risk" in the state for child health, fifth in the state for teen pregnancy, and highest in the state for asthma. The city has one of the lowest high school graduation rates in the state at 57.7% and a truancy rate approaching

10%. It is clear the town requires increased at-risk youth support and expanded early childhood education programs.

Transportation continues to be a pressing concern for Southbridge residents. Almost half (47%) of Southbridge's employed residents have jobs out of town and 22% work in Worcester or Sturbridge. However, there is very limited public transit to or within the town, and 12% of households do not own a vehicle. As a result, many residents do not have the means to travel to jobs. There is also no direct access to the regional highway system, resulting in fairly long commute times for those that do have transportation. (See Appendix B.)

The Town of Southbridge recently developed a Master Plan outlining 11 preliminary goals to improve the town for the future. These goals include:

- Increasing employment opportunities, including job training, increased access to higher education programs, and integrating job training with programs at Quinsigamond Community College.
- Providing more adult education and lifelong learning opportunities, and expanding English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and HiSET (High School Equivalency Test- formerly GED) courses.
- Investing in youth by providing job readiness and enhancing programming at the existing youth center.
- Taking care of the increasing elderly population by improving services for the elderly, especially and providing clearer communication about available resources to seniors in the area.
- Improving public transit options, especially for teens, seniors, the disabled and those who do not own vehicles.

WCAC is confident that with additional CSBG funding designated for this area and the support of local collaborators, it can provide crucial services to Southbridge that align with the community's vision for the future.

### **III. PLANNING PROCESS**

In early September 2013, the WCAC issued an RFP for a strategic plan consultant in preparation for the upcoming FY2015-2017 Community Action Plan process. The RFP was posted on the WCAC website and mailed to three consultants. Gammy Bird Consulting was selected, and a service contract was executed. As early as November 1, 2013, WCAC's Executive Director and Director of Planning and Development met with the Strategic Plan Consultant, Nancy Jackson, to discuss the overarching framework for the next three-year Community Action Plan.

WCAC's Board of Directors was introduced to the Strategic Plan Consultant at the Board meeting held on December 26, 2013. A general discussion occurred about what they believed the agency should focus on, what program/operating questions they should ask themselves, and the general direction in which the agency should head. A summary of the minutes from this meeting is included in Appendix I.

During this time frame, the federal sequestration budget cuts were still in effect, and program growth or enhancements were thought to be in a holding pattern. Although there was discussion about expanding strategies to achieve greater results, staff and Board members agreed that WCAC was operating within tight parameters. Since that time, the federal government has resumed level CSBG funding.

WCAC's Strategic Planning Team, comprised of the Executive Director, the Director of Planning and Development, and a Clark University Intern, held weekly and/or monthly meetings. Along with input from senior management and the Strategic Plan Consultant, the group developed focus group questions and surveys, and collected secondary data.

#### **IV. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

##### **A. METHODOLOGY**

###### **Client surveys**

Throughout February 2014, surveys were made available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Arabic to clients in all WCAC office locations and were also administered to clients receiving home energy audits and home visits through the Healthy Families program. A total of 265 clients responded to the survey, which asked questions pertaining to client satisfaction with services and client's most pressing needs. A copy of the survey in each language is located in Appendix D.

###### **Focus Groups**

A total of 14 organization representatives and community members participated in two community focus groups. The meetings were held at the Worcester and Southbridge Public Libraries and facilitated by the Strategic Plan Consultant. The groups discussed the indicators of poverty in the area, the continuing need for services, and the gaps in programming that prevent clients from becoming economically self-sufficient.

Additionally, a small group of four executives from the United Service Executive Committee (United Way-funded agencies) met to discuss trends, needs, practices, and attitudes that define WCAC's work with people living in poverty.

WCAC held its annual Legislative Breakfast on April 18, 2014. Nine legislators (including four aides representing Senators and Representatives) attended the briefing to learn about the agency's state-funded program priorities. At the close of the presentation, Executive Director Jill Dagilis asked the elected officials the following two questions: *What do you think are the three primary causes of poverty? Are WCAC four focus areas (employment, education, energy assistance and asset development) still relevant?*

Lastly, a meeting of 15 representatives for the Youth Jobs Advisory Board at the WCAC Jobs and Education Center focused on the questions: *What are the challenges as an employer of at-risk youth? What factors make it difficult to help youth stay employed?*

## **B. RESULTS**

### **Client Surveys**

The results of the client surveys show that the top needs identified by clients include:

1. Employment Opportunities (49.6%)
2. Affordable Heat and Utilities (47.9%)
3. Getting a good education/ graduating from high school (40.8%)
4. Affordable housing (40.4%)
5. Affordable food (38.8%)

Additionally, 82% of clients who responded are satisfied with the services they receive at WCAC a lot of the time, and 17.6% of clients who responded are satisfied with the services they receive at WCAC most of the time. The surveys also showed that the majority of respondents reside in Worcester (37.5%) and Southbridge (28.6%) and that 42% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 40. A full breakdown of the results from the client surveys is located in Appendix E.

### **Focus Groups**

The discussion during the community focus groups highlighted several issues concerning those living in poverty in the Worcester area. The need for increased job training and education supports was a prominent discussion topic for all the groups. Both the Southbridge and Worcester groups spoke about the need for a career pipeline, where education and training are more directly connected to real employment opportunities. Also highlighted was the need to increase the minimum wage so entry level employment wages can keep pace with the true cost of living. Transportation was mentioned as a part of this discussion several times, since the limited bus service in the region makes traveling to work very difficult. This issue particularly affects the youth and the elderly.

The challenge of providing language and job training support for recent immigrants also emerged in almost every conversation. It was pointed out that after finding a job, immigrants were often unable to continue attending ESOL classes, and these classes tend to have long waiting lists. Health care emerged as another important issue, specifically the lack of mental health services available in the area. Community facilities have been reducing their affordable mental health services, in large part due to the rising costs to providers, and many low-income patients then resort to hospital emergency rooms.

In every focus group, the need to increase the accessibility of services was a central discussion topic. One participant noted that clients can feel embarrassed going through the process of applying for programs or become confused by eligibility requirements. In addition, clients may struggle to understand the full range of services available to them, especially those moving into or within the state. It was mentioned that social media could provide a low-cost marketing option to communicate with clients.

The United Services Executives and legislators noted that the non-profit field is increasingly fragmented and discussed WCAC's potential for external relationship building. They recommended that WCAC focus on finding opportunities for collaboration and establishing strategic partnerships to leverage funding opportunities. Several legislators also noted that, as a federally mandated anti-poverty agency, WCAC is in a strong position to take the lead in building service delivery capacity within the region.

It was also mentioned several times that there is an ongoing need to shift the perception of poverty among the wider community and reduce the 'language of blame and dependency.' It was suggested that WCAC could continue to play an important role in reshaping the image of poverty in the wider community.

For the complete meeting minutes for each focus group, please refer to Appendix H.

## **V. INTERNAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

### **A. METHODOLOGY**

#### **Staff Surveys**

In February 2014, surveys were sent to all staff members electronically through Survey Monkey; hard copies were also available in the event that staff members were unable to complete the survey online. One hundred staff (out of 120) completed surveys that discussed client services and needs and asked them to evaluate their experience with the agency work environment. A copy of the survey sent to staff members is located in Appendix F.

#### **Staff Focus Group**

A broad cross-section of staff was asked to participate in a two-hour focus group on April 18, 2014. Twenty-three staff attended the discussion facilitated by the Strategic Plan Consultant. After reviewing the results of the staff survey, the facilitator asked the question, "What do we hope to see in place at WCAC in three years?" A lively discussion followed and, collectively, the group named key areas for strategic improvements both internally and externally for the following three years.

#### **Board Meetings**

WCAC's Board of Directors discussed the vision for the strategic plan with the Strategic Plan Consultant at the holiday Board meeting on December 16, 2013. WCAC's Executive Director and the Executive Committee of the Board then met on May 19, 2014 to discuss ways in which WCAC could position itself in a stronger and more vital role, following a year-long careful assessment of its current and future internal programs, funding and its associated regulations, and legal opportunities and challenges. On June 16, 2014, a full Board meeting was held at which the Strategic Plan Consultant presented the organizational 'theory of change' and strategies for the future.

## B. RESULTS

### Staff Surveys

Overall, WCAC staff highly ranked their satisfaction with their work environment. Employees were asked to evaluate the level of respect, fairness, communication, pride and honesty they felt at the agency. Over 84% of the staff responded that they feel positively about the organization “always” or “most often.” Additionally, staff were asked to rate their experience working with clients, including their ability to effectively communicate, and client knowledge of WCAC programs. On a scale of 1 (highest) to 6 (lowest), no staff member responded with a ranking lower than 2.5.

Staff ranked the work environment within their program or department with similarly high numbers. The only two areas with slightly lower ratings were the issues of staffing levels and effective communication. Some respondents indicated that communication between departments could be somewhat inconsistent and that not all staff are informed about changes at the same time.

Staff were also asked about the conditions of the facility in which they spend the majority of their time. While ratings were relatively high for *adequate parking* and *convenient location*, *adequate space to meet with clients* and *privacy with clients* received more mixed results. Out of the 27% who indicated that meeting space in their facilities was ‘poor’ or ‘fair,’ 50% work in youth and family development programs, primarily in the two Southbridge locations. Another 28% of those are from energy assistance, all of whom work in the Denholm building in Worcester.

The staff survey also asked several open-ended response questions asking about other client needs WCAC should be addressing, what the organization could be doing differently and what education and training would be helpful. The top issues staff feel are affecting clients’ ability to improve their lives are a lack of affordable housing, money, employment opportunities, and transportation. Some respondents also noted a need for mental health counseling, more outreach through community centers and the media, increased support for Southern Worcester County, and better communication with families to address all of their needs. Common challenges expressed by staff include low staffing levels, uncertainty around funding year to year, and tight restrictions and regulations that slow down the process of helping clients. Staff indicated that training and education opportunities should include inter-department cross-training, more coordinated services, customer service training, staff team building, computer/software training, and workshops with other agencies/providers. The complete breakdown of the staff survey results is located in Appendix G.

### **Staff Focus Group**

The staff participating in the focus group identified major goals both internally and externally for the organization over the next three years. The full list of goals from the session and the discussion that followed is located in Appendix H. The major categories, as organized by the facilitator after the meeting, include:

#### **Staff Satisfaction**

- Stronger, Enhanced Team
- Meaningful and Competitive Compensation Strategy

#### **Updated Infrastructure**

- Inviting and Highly functional facilities
- Functional, Integrated Technology
- Accessibly and Flexible Transportation

#### **Adaptive, Flexible Client Service**

- Flexible Growth (Primarily funding)
- Empowered, Self-Sufficient Clientele
- Supportive Case Management
- Enhanced Marketing and Communications

### **Board Meetings**

The strategic planning discussions that took place at the December 2013 and June 2014 Board meetings highlighted the challenges and opportunities for the agency as it charts its course for the future. Board members shared their thoughts on the vision for the organization over the next three years and what they would like to see the agency accomplish. Initially, concerns were raised about the ability of the agency to make any significant changes considering the restrictions and regulations that come with state and federal funding. However, the group also recognized the strength of the organization in implementing successful programs and building partnerships within the community, which could serve to generate additional funding. It was also mentioned that the organization has an opportunity to think creatively about increasing revenue-generating programs.

The consensus that emerged from the two discussions was that WCAC is well-positioned to take a leadership role within the region for human services and that further exploration into this idea should take place in the coming year. The agency's focus should be on providing a better service delivery model by increasing access to services and building trusting relationships with clients. Preliminary research would need to include a more complete assessment of complementary services available in WCAC's service area. This was seen as an important step to better understand potential alliances and/or redundancies. Board leaders underscored the importance of careful due diligence prior to any potential organizational shifts, including legal and funding implications.

Other priorities for the coming year included stabilizing the Head Start building leases and making building repairs or upgrades as a way to improve service delivery. It was also suggested that the agency capitalize on the higher education resources in the region to help with research and data collection. Detailed minutes for the December 2013 meeting are located in Appendix I, and minutes for the June 2014 meeting, along with the handout and presentation slides are located in Appendix H.

### **Selection of Priorities**

The primary data collected by WCAC staff and the Strategic Plan Consultant validated the secondary data that showed the “pressing” needs of 50 years ago have not changed. A December 8, 1995, *Telegram & Gazette* newspaper article’s headline reads, “Cuts Leave Many Out in Cold,” which shows that in the 10 years since the article was written, people continue to need assistance (the full article is located in Appendix A). In addition to cyclical basic needs, other issues rose to the top: new immigrant populations; increased state and federal regulations; democratic/republican differences on policy, programs, and funding; unemployment; growing economic disparities; poor youth education; insufficient entry-level youth jobs; multiple organizations with smaller programs; and the dilemma of meeting basic needs versus creating systemic change.

WCAC will continue programs that offer successful outcomes: emergency services such as fuel assistance and other energy programs; asset development programs including SNAP, Individual Development Account (IDA), Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and financial literacy; housing referrals and the AGO Borrowers’ Recovery Initiative (should additional funding be awarded); education that includes both HiSET and the Worcester Internship and GED Study Program (WINGS); young adult work readiness skills training, summer YouthWorks, and job placement; along with youth and family support such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and Healthy Families programs. At the same time, WCAC will focus on building human and social capital among the staff and customers through collaborations with other similar nonprofits by making referrals and offering new family case management to expand a wider safety net of services.

## **VI. SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

As one of the largest non-profit social service agencies in the region, WCAC operates with a budget of over \$19 million and serves over 75,000 income-limited individuals and families every year in Worcester and 44 surrounding towns. WCAC offers 15 economic self-sufficiency programs and emergency services. The agency is proud of its stable finances, sound annual audits, and strong program monitoring and evaluation results. The organization has a total of 90 full-time and 30 part-time employees and operates with a lean management team, including the Executive Director, and the Directors of Planning and Development, Finance, Human Resources, and Energy. The senior management team meets weekly, and the six program managers meet monthly to provide updates on program performance and discuss budgets and other issues. WCAC also employs interns from local colleges to conduct research for the organization. The

entire WCAC Board of Directors meets six times per year, every other month, and the Board’s Executive Committee meets six times per year in the alternating months.

WCAC engages in strategic multi-media outreach to educate the community about its programs. The organization markets its services through mailings, referral efforts, website updates, and by distributing information at community events. In addition, WCAC is provided with additional publicity as a partner agency of the United Way of Central Massachusetts. WCAC also communicates regularly with local schools, businesses, and organizations to reach potential clients. Descriptions of each program provided by WCAC are listed below, and a complete chart of towns served by WCAC’s programs is located in Appendix B.

**Service Category: Education and Employment**

Program	Description
Project Excel	HiSET and pre-employment skills training for 16-21 year-old at-risk youth who have dropped out of high school. Additional services include: job development, case management, computer training, community service, and life skills training.
WINGS	HiSET and pre-employment skills training for 16-21 year-old at-risk youth who have dropped out of high school.
Work Readiness Skills Training	Income eligible youth ages 16-24 enroll in 6-week work readiness skills training and, upon completion, are assisted with job search and placement with local employers.
Youthworks	Six-week paid minimum wage summer jobs for income-eligible youth ages 16-21. Provides participants with pre-employment training, job placement, and work-based learning plan tools.
Start Our Success	Enrolls young adults, high- risk probationers, and recently released Worcester offenders, ages 17-24, in WCAC summer work experience programs. SOS is funded by the Community Safety Initiative and referrals are made by the Worcester Police Department.

**Service Category: Energy Assistance**

Program	Description
Fuel Assistance	Administer federally funded LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program), adding private funds to help reduce client’s energy burden. Staff accepts applications through outreach, mail, and face-to-face interviews and, after certifying applications, pays vendors directly.
Energy Efficiency (includes HEARTWAP, AMPS, DOE WAP)	Provide energy efficiency education and installations to low-income clients (tenants or owners) including full weatherization, heating system repair/replacement, and replacement of inefficient lighting and appliance using federal and utility company funding.

**Service Category: Youth/Family Development**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Description</b>
Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County	Assists first-time parents aged 21 and under from pregnancy through their child's third birthday. Expecting mothers learn skills and practices to ensure a healthy pregnancy. Staff also conducts home visits to parenting teens to provide parenting skills and nutrition education.
Head Start	A preschool program, located at three sites in Southern Worcester County that provides services to low-income children and families.
Early Head Start	Operates as a home-based model serving 48 families in Southern Worcester County and a child care option in collaboration with the Tri-Community YMCA.

**Service Category: Asset Building/Income Management**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Description</b>
Earned Income Tax Credit	Provides pro bono tax assistance to low-income individuals and families; prepare and submit state and federal tax returns. Post cards providing information about the service are mailed to all LIHEAP customers and information is available at all WCAC locations.
Individual Development Account	Assists low-income families in developing weekly saving plans directed toward a down payment and/or closing costs. Clients participate in a six-week financial literacy training as well as monthly meetings and trainings where they receive guidance managing their assets.
SNAP	Assists income-eligible community members in enrolling for SNAP benefits to purchase nutritional food for their families. Clients may be referred through other agencies or visit the office during walk-in hours.

**VII. LINKAGES**

Relationship building is one of WCAC's core strategies to strengthen the community and families and the services customers access.

Currently, WCAC has strong ties to the higher education institutions in the city through the Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts as well the Massachusetts Education & Career Opportunities, Inc. (MassEdCo). These viable partners provide education workshops, offer assistance with financial aid forms, encourage internships, and donate time and money.

The local philanthropic foundations and financial institutions donate funding and offer in-kind goods and services to strengthen programs and agency capacity building. Many offer good counsel when WCAC wrestles with specific issues (e.g., alternate Head Start location for temporary use). Local banks and credit unions participate in asset-development and financial literacy workshops for customers and staff and support the agency with funds in efforts to expand opportunities for the individuals and families served.

The Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and its business community attend youth employment meetings, offer summer jobs, and provide work skills training to participants in the Job and Education Center programs. WCAC works closely with the CMWIB, the Worcester City Manager's office, the Worcester Career Center, and several strong youth-serving agencies.

WCAC is an active participant in the WRTA and the CMRPC's Comprehensive Service Analysis Process as a means to identify the gaps in public transportation including diverse customers, routes, hours of travel, and ways to increase and/or devise alternative services by 2015, required by a legislative mandate of the Transportation Finance Bill. At the same time, WCAC is a member of the CMRPC Regional Coordinating Council that meets monthly to discuss and implement improved transportation.

Youth/young adult homelessness is a growing issue. WCAC joined the newly formed strategic alliance of youth-serving agencies, spearheaded by LUK, Inc., that offer various services and track youth in the homeless system. Although state funding is not available in FY2015, WCAC continues to collaborate with South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Worcester Youth Center, YMCA/YWCA, Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, Community Healthy Link, Friendly House, the Bridge of Central Massachusetts, Worcester Community Connections Coalition, Stand Up For Kids, and Straight Ahead Ministries. It should be noted that Representative James O'Day has legislative support for a line item in the State Budget for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.

WCAC's primary housing partner is the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA) where the agencies work together on providing wraparound services to prevent homelessness and offer assistance. Community Legal Aid is a strong referral partner in much of the foreclosure prevention work. WCAC participated in the Attorney General's Office Homeowner Assistance Program and HOMEbase—serving as both case manager and offering wraparound services and referrals.

Worcester is one of the Commonwealth's resettlement communities. The number of immigrants, refugees, and asylees has grown significantly, along with the demand for services among newcomer groups. WCAC will continue to build strategic alliances with local agencies such as Ascentria Care Alliance (formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England), Southeast Asian Coalition, the East African Outreach Center, Catholic Charities, and the Family Health and Edward M. Kennedy Health Centers to facilitate referrals.

WCAC will explore the idea of expanding its out-posting staff to key partner locations in the area on a regular basis to enable residents with transportation or cultural barriers to access services. Currently, several fuel staff are available in some of the area towns' Councils on Aging or town halls for specific days of the week. To further increase accessibility, WCAC will provide a Vietnamese staff person to work out of the Southeast Asian Coalition offices in the Denholm Building where WCAC is also located to offer fuel assistance application intake. WCAC fuel intake staff will also work in the Ascentria Care Alliance offices to provide easy access to immigrant residents. Program outreach is an excellent strategy that can be modeled for other program services.

WCAC is continuing its *Building Bridges* program in South County to introduce the agency's services to businesses and other organizations in which families in the Head Start and Healthy Families programs reside.

The WCAC Executive Director is affiliated with and serves on several boards: MassEdCo, the Worcester Business Development Council, Worcester State University Foundation, the CMWIB, and the Denholm Condo Association. WCAC's Director of Planning and Development participates in MASSCAP's Planners' Group; the Human Resources Director participates in the Human Resources Group; the Director of Finance participates in the Finance Group; and the Energy Director participates in Massachusetts Energy Directors Association (MEDA); Green 2 Growth Council, hosted by National Grid; and the Worcester Rotary Club.

## VIII. EVALUATION OF NATIONAL GOALS AND INDICATORS AND AGENCY OUTCOMES

### Priority #1: Education and Employment

**Issue:** How can WCAC strengthen the employment and education programs for young adults to be successful?

#### **Strategy Statement**

WCAC is widely known for its youth employment and education programs and has had a long and successful track record for almost 48 years. WCAC serves highly at-risk, income-limited young people ages 16-24, many of whom are high school drop outs and probationers with soft CORIs. Secondary data shows that Worcester has a higher school drop-out rate of 4.1% compared with the State's rate of 2.5% in 2012. As the job market continues to expand, the required education and job skills continue to be out of reach for most of the at-risk young people the agency serves.

In 2009, when federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds were made available, WCAC established a separate Job and Education Center (JEC) that provided over 100 at-risk young people with education and jobs. The \$1 M program served five 20-student cohorts over a one-year period, and five full- and part-time staff were hired to provide education, job training, case management, and other supports. WCAC worked closely with the Worcester Public Schools to deliver a 2010 summer Credit Recovery pilot in which 12 students received their high school diplomas. Given its resounding success, when the Center closed due to expiring ARRA funds, WCAC developed a smaller version of the program based on the many accomplishments. The JEC was a proven model!

As WCAC's goal for the first year of FY2012-2014 Community Action Plan, the agency assessed all GED/ABE/ESOL programs in Worcester to determine the number of students achieving their GED each year, their ages, the cost, the length of the classes, and the number of classes offered each year. The findings documented that WCAC has successful and accessible HiSET programs for several reasons: it is free, it allows for students to drop in/drop out and re-

enroll (as happens because people in poverty often do not have “safety nets” for challenges in their lives), testing occurs when the student is ready, and each student gets one-on-one attention.

Over 40 young people graduate every year from WCAC’s HiSET programs, which enroll disadvantaged young adults ages 16-24. Young people are often referred by school guidance counselors or the participants refer their friends to WCAC. Once students achieve their high school equivalency, many continue on to attend Quinsigamond Community College, work part or full time, or enroll in WCAC’s Work Readiness program.

WCAC’s Job Developer assists with job placements with local businesses and companies. WCAC holds two annual Business Advisory Board meetings at which about 20 employers attend to discuss employment opportunities, the types of skills the young adults require, and personal challenges the employees face. Employer collaboration provides an opportunity for WCAC to learn the extent of the barriers (soft skills) that challenge the participants, along with the job skills required for available jobs. WCAC is hard-wired to several large family-owned businesses that offer entry-level positions to motivated young adults.

Now in its tenth year, WCAC has been the lead contractor for the Summer and Year-Round YouthWorks program providing over 400 young people with summer jobs funded by a grant from the Commonwealth Corporation through the CMWIB. In the first year of the FY 2015-2017 Community Action Plan, WCAC will collaborate with Quinsigamond Community College to ensure that the young adults have support and access to job skills certificate programs in the growing healthcare and light manufacturing fields. Quinsigamond’s presence in Worcester and Southbridge will allow WCAC’s students access to these programs. WCAC will reach out to MassEdCo to develop a referral/tracking system of the young people who require and receive financial application assistance, as well as securing the funds to support their education. During the second year, WCAC will formalize agreements with Quinsigamond Community College and the nationally-acclaimed Worcester Technical School to offer certificate and trade programs, along with higher education opportunities to ensure young people are skilled and educated for the workers of the future.

Because of its strong track record in working with young people, WCAC is ready to take the JEC to a new level! WCAC will expand private sector involvement with job preparation and placement generally and through its role in the CMWIB, the City Manager’s Youth Advisory Board, and the City’s Youth Opportunities Office. The CMWIB’s three year strategic plan coincides with WCAC’s FY2015-2017 Community Action Plan, and both entities are poised to prepare “Central Massachusetts youth for career success by age 21.” Partnerships between businesses and education programs are becoming a necessity for economic job growth. To this end, the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce recently partnered with the Higher Education Consortium of Central Massachusetts to expand the Internship Collaborative to the region. The “Intern Hub” program, initially started in Boston, will allow member businesses to post internship opportunities by employers for students to gain necessary job skills.

In FY2014, WCAC’s Head Start program located in Southbridge secured a \$33,000 Community Development Block Grant from the Town of Southbridge and offered ESOL and HiSET programs to income-eligible residents. Twenty-two adults enrolled in ESOL classes—seven of whom were Head Start parents, and 25 adults completed the HiSET program, four of whom were Head Start parents.

<b>HiSET and ESOL Activities</b>	<b>National Performance Indicators</b>
Expand HiSET to include adults and pre-GED to address students testing at or below 7th grade level.	<b>1.2: Employment Supports</b>
Expand the number of educational pathways for youth and young adults interested in pursuing jobs, higher education, and military service with local community colleges and technical schools.	<b>2.1: Community Improvement and Revitalization</b>
<b>Head Start</b>	<b>National Performance Indicators</b>
Maintain the HiSET/ESOL program in Southbridge for WCAC’s Head Start families.	<b>6.3: Child and Family Development</b>

<b>Pre-Employment</b>	<b>National Performance Indicators</b>
Incorporate work readiness skills, building workshops to increase coping and life skills.	<b>1.2: Employment Supports</b>
Work with education institutions (e.g., Quinsigamond Community College) to train and certify students in childcare/early childhood education for Head Start programs and healthcare sector jobs, or enroll students in viable certificate programs.	<b>1.2: Employment Supports</b>
<b>Job Placement</b>	<b>National Performance Indicators</b>
Advocate for additional funding for Youthworks wages to expand the number of youth and jobs.	<b>2.1: Community Improvement and Revitalization</b>
Expand diverse multi-sector employers as colleagues to help address the gap in jobs for disadvantaged youth, along with identified barriers (CORI issues).	<b>2.1: Community Improvement and Revitalization</b>
<b>Private Sector Partnerships</b>	<b>National Performance Indicators</b>
Coordinate partners (i.e., WIB, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce) to develop a formal advisory board of private sector employers to assist with job preparation and placement.	<b>4.1: Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships</b>
<b>Education and Employment</b>	<b>National Performance Indicators</b>
Offer the Board-approved scholarship program annually to two students enrolling in higher education courses and/or certificate programs.	<b>1.2: Employment Supports</b>

**Priority #2: Energy Assistance**

**Issue:** How can WCAC best assist low-income residents to become more energy efficient?

**Strategy Statement**

WCAC will devote efforts to increasing communication about the energy programs. While fuel assistance applications are rising overall, poverty rates in South County towns illustrate the need for greater assistance. Without knowing how to access services, many income-eligible households are unaware of the assistance available.

The Energy’s Program’s goal is to help reduce the energy burden on low-income households, allowing families and individuals the opportunity to spread limited resources as necessary. In addition to traditional application methods, WCAC fuel staff will deliberately and strategically outreach to working low-income households, to families with young children, and to seniors and households that are supporting themselves on fixed incomes such as social security and disability assistance. Increased engagement and collaboration with critical social service programs in towns WCAC serves will strengthen the referral network. WCAC will provide energy efficiency training, financial education, and referral services directly to households who have found themselves in emergency situations during the previous winter, directing clients on a path to self-sufficiency. The Energy Efficiency staff will continue to prioritize the most vulnerable households to provide energy efficiency measures such as insulation, heating system replacement, and energy management education.

Plans are underway to work with Town officials to offer fuel assistance information to residents, develop a PSA which will run on local cable networks, and place fuel assistance staff at strategic locations to reach underserved populations.

Fuel Assistance	National Performance Indicators
Increase the accessibility of LIHEAP in the Southern and Western areas through satellite outreach sites staffed by partnering agencies.	<b>4.1: Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships</b>
Continue educational efforts on benefits of weatherization to reduce demand for LIHEAP and improve energy efficiencies.	<b>2.1: Community Improvement and Revitalization</b>
Energy Conservation	National Performance Indicators
Increase weatherization effectiveness through advanced building diagnostics during initial audit.	<b>2.1: Community Improvement and Revitalization</b>
Increase National Grid AMP audit production by completing yearly goals ahead of schedule showing capacity for additional units, which will increase administration revenue.	<b>2.1: Community Improvement and Revitalization</b>
Increase WCAC’s role in the LEAN Multi-family and Energywise programs through cross-training DOE auditors, which will increase administrative revenue.	<b>5.1: Broadening the Resource Base</b>

Energy Conservation (Continued)	National Performance Indicators
Participate with municipalities and other entities to deliver multi-tiered energy efficiency programming across low, moderate, and market-rate housing sectors.	<b>6.2: Emergency Assistance</b>

**Priority #3: Asset Development**

**Issue:** How can WCAC increase asset development, with the goal of helping people obtain permanent housing, purchase a computer and/or car?

**Strategy Statement**

WCAC will focus its asset development activities on providing staff and customers with financial education and helping them to establish budgets. WCAC customers will access SNAP benefits, take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit program, and/or enroll in the Individual Development Account (IDA) with the goal of saving enough money to move them to economic self-sufficiency. Recognizing that asset development is a crucial building block of self-sufficiency for all ages, WCAC will include both youth and adult customers in these efforts.

Asset Development	National Performance Indicators
Provide financial literacy curriculum and develop plan for integration into all agency programs.	<b>1.3: Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization</b>
Continue the annual EITC program by employing a part-time EITC Coordinator to oversee WCAC’s VITA program, recruit tax preparer volunteers, and outreach to a larger audience as funds are available.	<b>1.3: Economic Asset Enhancement and Utilization</b>
Lead Abatement	National Performance Indicators
Establish lasting partnerships with other nonprofits, city and town officials, realtors, banks, and contractors to increase attendance of Moderate Risk Deleading Training by 25%.	<b>2.1: Community Improvement and Revitalization</b>
Housing Assistance	National Performance Indicators
Collaborate with local Community Development Corporations, Community Legal Aid, and Central MA Housing Alliance to support housing programs with wraparound services as needed.	<b>4.1: Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships</b>

**Priority #4: Youth and Family Development**

**Issue:** How can WCAC strengthen the employment and education programs for young adults and families to be successful?

**Strategy Statement**

As shown by primary and secondary data, Southbridge and contiguous towns in Southern Worcester County have significant pockets of poverty, given its rural environment. Coupled

with low wages and unemployment, the communities lack sufficient public transportation, alternative education programs for parents, and case management services. WCAC intends to continue advocating for Community Service Block Grant funds to support Southbridge residents, ensure that the agency’s three Head Start/Early Head Start facilities are in optimal condition to maintain accreditation, and develop a network of service providers to support families and children.

Family Health Center of Worcester is expanding its dental programs in Southbridge and (as of this writing) may be co-locating with the Southbridge Head Start program in the School Administration Building, which will provide better access for young children and their families. The Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County has received accolades from the Children’s Trust Fund/Massachusetts Department of Public Health in its important work to prevent child abuse and neglect, improve teen parenting skills, and promote increased educational attainment and employment.

While we know that providing early childhood education to children of income-limited families is beneficial for their long term education, it also has significant impacts on the parents. By providing access to free childcare, parents have the opportunity to go to work and/or attend school. WCAC will strategically meet with local service providers to develop a referral and safety network that will support these vulnerable populations. WCAC will develop strategies with the Worcester Public Schools to provide outreach to income-limited families to offer LIHEAP, EITC, and SNAP programs that will help them with asset building and increasing their standard of living.

Youth and Families	National Performance Indicators
Connect participants to at least one community resource that will help them increase their standard of living.	<b>4.1: Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships</b>
Develop a strong database of service providers who work with our potential clients in all areas of our footprint and use this to communicate important program information and drive referrals.	<b>4.1: Expanding Opportunities through Community-Wide Partnerships</b>

**Priority #5: Capacity Building**

**Issue:** How can WCAC develop an adaptive, flexible client-service approach among community collaborators?

**Strategy Statement**

In addition to advocacy for public policy change, WCAC knows that building human and social capital is critical to create a safety net of strong services and programs. The DHCD/NIQCA review in 2012-2013 prompted a careful, introspective look at the way in which WCAC operated its programs and services and methodically addressed each area. As part of this process, WCAC staff completed Quality Improvement Tracking reports by July 15, 2014, and provided Board

meeting minutes documenting approval of the new policies and procedures. It should be noted that WCAC continues to establish “best practices” procedures for programs and administrative activities wherever possible.

WCAC’s entire staff participated in a one-day *Bridges Out of Poverty* presentation at the annual staff day at Worcester State University on June 6, 2014. The nationally-acclaimed program of aha! Process, Inc. has several poverty-reduction curricula available for trainings and individual study. This particular program defines poverty as “the extent to which an individual does without resources,” and discusses three economic environments—generational poverty, middle class, and generational wealth. The training provided the agency with a “mind shift”—“understanding why people do what they do.” Through this training, WCAC recognized the four areas in which the agency and community need to collaborate: strengthening and expanding human and social capital, reducing exploitation, understanding political/economic structures, and recognizing behaviors of the individual.

Diverse funding supports the myriad programs and projects that further client self-sufficiency, enhanced staff training, and communication/marketing efforts. WCAC will continue to evaluate and improve its own performance, as well as provide training, education, and skill-building opportunities to staff and Board members.

Staff surveys and focus groups identified budget limitations, unfunded state and federal program mandates, and limited staff as challenges for optimal program delivery. After discussing the results of the staff focus group and surveys, along with thoughtful feedback on the *Bridges Out of Poverty* presentation, program managers determined the following capacity-building strategies for the organization:

#### Capacity Building

- Explore creative strategic alliances such as mergers, coordinated understood agreements, and/or acquisition of larger/smaller agencies and integrate service delivery models that are streamlined and improve benefits to customers.
- Research the resources available to individuals, communities, and businesses and identify gaps.

#### Information Technology

- Implement technology upgrades to computers/printers/copiers.
- Increase the use of social media as marketing, fundraising, and communication tools.
- Encourage electronic communication whenever possible to reduce demand on physical space.

#### Training

- Cross train at the senior management level for leadership, communication, and succession planning.
- Provide agency-wide training on myriad topics ranging from computer skills to management practices.

#### Facilities

- Conduct an assessment of current needs at the Denholm building, including surveys of administrative and program staff.

- Head Start Directors meet quarterly with town and school officials in Southbridge, Oxford, and Spencer to ensure that facilities are maintained in accordance with federal Head Start regulations and open communication among all partners continue.
- Continue to research co-locations for Head Start programs in South County and secure long-term leases and/or mortgages.

Compensation Strategy

- Research reinstating the 403(b) match and/or retirement contribution plan.
- Continue offering creative flex time opportunities, explore expanding hours for customer service, starting with LIHEAP, to allow for more staff flex time.

Capacity Building	National Performance Indicators
Provide agency-wide staff training to expand knowledge, skills, and professionalism.	<b>5.1: Broadening the Resource Base</b>
Continue to recruit low-income people to participate on the Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council to provide input in decision making and policy setting.	<b>3.2: Community Involvement Through Maximum Feasible Participation</b>

**IX. THREE-YEAR FUNDING STRATEGY**

**Funding Efforts FY2012-2014**

WCAC’s FY2013 budget was \$19,603,205. Approximately 93% is state and federally funded, with the remaining seven percent secured from annual agency campaigns, private grants, revenue, corporate donations and sponsorships, and events. In FY2013, WCAC received a value of \$836,799 in donated in-kind goods and services to provide ancillary support to programs. These supports included donated children’s coats, breakfast food for young adults in HiSET and work readiness programs, and tax preparation from trained volunteers resulting in a more holistic service for the agency’s customers.

In FY2012-2014, WCAC ran two capital campaigns for communications/technology upgrades that raised \$70,000 in donations for each campaign. A capital campaign will be developed for FY2015 to secure funding to support agency-wide copier/printer upgrades. A technology line item is included in each annual budget to ensure that the agency is operating efficiently and effectively. WCAC also conducts an annual campaign that began in 2006 with the hiring of the Director of Planning and Development (at that time entitled Organizational Development Administrator). The campaign generates over \$23,000 in unrestricted funding each year, with 100% Board giving.

The fuel assistance program continues to generate interest and concern, and the amount of fuel-specific donations has increased every year: \$287,000 was donated in FY2014, \$225,000 in FY2013, and \$215,000 in FY2012. It is anticipated that unsolicited fuel assistance funds will exceed the previous year’s amount to support income-eligible households.

WCAC’s annual Action Hero Award event, held during National Community Action Month in May, raises approximately \$16,000 (net income) in unrestricted funds. The event results in

extensive media coverage, promotes community awareness about the agency and its programs/services, cultivates new corporate relationships, and is recognized by Worcester City Council via proclamations of Worcester Community Action Month.

The Annual Legislative Breakfast, held in March, informs local representatives and senators of state and federal proposed grant needs, as they relate to the agency's programs. Monitoring the state and federal budgets is an ongoing process throughout the year to ensure that the agency advocates for level or increased funding.

Multimedia marketing efforts have provided additional community awareness about WCAC's programs, services, customers, and communities it serves. Individuals interested in volunteering and/or donating has grown significantly, as demonstrated by the incremental three-year increase in donations.

A *Building Bridges* relationship-building and education program was developed two years ago for South County businesses and organizations to learn about programs and services that are available for their staff and customers. These efforts have garnered monetary support, recruitment of leaders for the agency Board of Directors, and collaborators on specific initiatives. A long term goal of this program is to conduct a capital campaign to support Head Start's facilities and equipment needs.

### **Funding Strategy FY2015-2017**

For the next three years, WCAC will focus on building linkages and/or co-locating with larger nonprofits for efficiencies, exploring programs that could be enhanced, and/or applying for larger national grants that could potentially improve the lives of many more income-limited individuals and families, thus creating an impact that will be qualitatively and quantitatively measurable.

The agency will continue to build its funding base leveraged by CSBG dollars, which is the most flexible support in WCAC's budget. WCAC intends to look strategically at each program to determine cost effectiveness, along with program effectiveness prior to approaching local private and corporate funders. Program capability and sustainability will be analyzed, rather than expending efforts to secure additional funding without an intentional plan. Additionally, the organization has recently transitioned from an Excel database for fundraising/event planning/marketing to DonorSnap, a more sophisticated database that can track funders, event attendees, and more.

The WCAC Board of Directors is spearheading a new fundraising initiative in the fall of 2014: A Leadership Breakfast series, to be held a minimum of twice a year. A Board member will work with the fundraising chair to develop invitations that generate new "friends and funds."

During FY2015, WCAC will hold a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration to commemorate President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. Event specifics are still under discussion at the time of writing this plan. The successful Annual Action Heroes awards may be held in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

Asset-building programs provide opportunities for individuals and families to improve their living conditions. WCAC will work with the United Way of Central Massachusetts in coordination with MASSCAP to secure funding that will allow Worcester's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) network – WCAC, the Main South CDC, Plumley Village, and Worcester State University – to offer the free EITC Program to hundreds of eligible households.

The Annual “Clothe-A-Child” new coat drive continues to be necessary for WCAC's Head Start Children and children of the teen parents in the Job and Education Center programs. WCAC's list of donors has grown rapidly, and the coat drive is an opportunity for people to give back in small ways such as knitting hats and mittens to be given with coats.

The following revenue-generating energy programs will be expanded over the next three years:

- Moderate Risk Lead-Abatement Training generates revenue from class fees of \$150/person per class with a minimum of three participants to support personnel and supply costs associated with the program.
- National Grid, National Grid Gas, and NSTAR pay a percentage of the cost of measures (e.g., insulation) installed in the homes as an administrative fee.
- The NSTAR's Conservation Action Program (NCAP) Multifamily Program pays a consulting rate to WCAC to assign contractors to the jobs.
- National Grid Electric funds the Appliance Management Program (AMP) in which WCAC is paid per appointment and for all installed measures. This allows the agency to make a profit from the light bulbs.

Although monetary support is always necessary to operate programs, design projects, and purchase equipment/ materials that most grant-funded contracts disallow, the agency is cognizant of the strength of its human capital to support program development. Cross-training of program staff will be at the forefront of building WCAC human capital. A Staff Training line item is included and funded in the FY2015 budget to support professional development at all staffing levels.

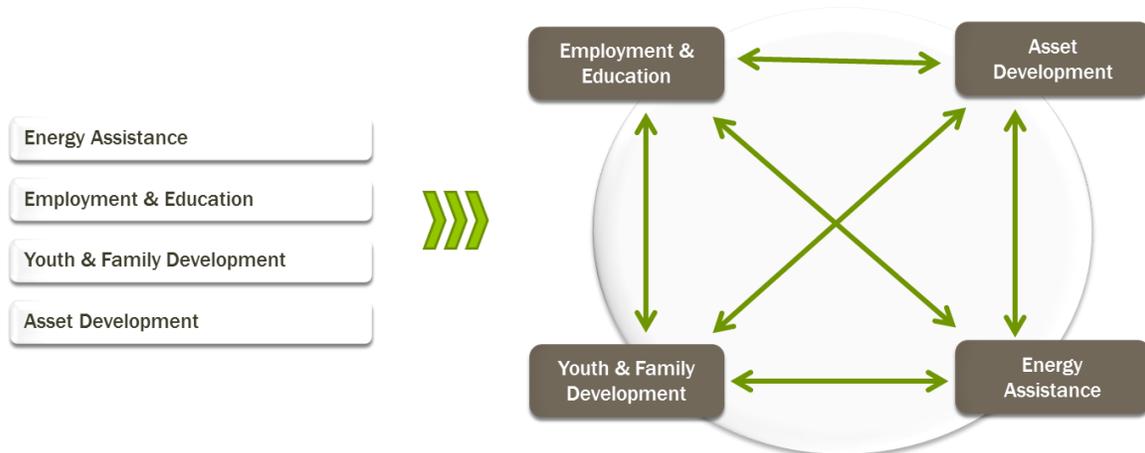
## X. VISION STATEMENT

The WCAC's three-year vision is to integrate its theory of change into all that it does – its approach, principles, structure, and interface with the community. The vision is to utilize the understanding that *providing access* (and removing barriers to access) coupled with *building trust and relationships* with the people WCAC serves, will make all the difference in WCAC being successful in helping people reach their goals and move out of poverty. WCAC has two major strategies to achieve this.

### Strategy 1: Cross Pollination of Services

WCAC's first major strategy focuses on the internal cross pollination of services. As demonstrated in Figure 4, rather than allow programs to operate in isolation, programs will focus on an integrated service delivery model. Staff communication and intake procedures will enhance access for clients to the services they seek in addition to connections to other potentially needed services in Energy Assistance, Employment and Education, Youth and Family Development, and Asset Development.

**Fig. 4 Strategy 1**



To do this, WCAC's agency-wide goals are to:

- Build an enhanced team approach, with strong cross training and a streamlined internal communication system
- Restructure the supervisory authority of programming, better aligning programs with leadership skill and capacity
- Update WCAC's infrastructure with inviting, multi-use facilities; reassess current space for better client service delivery
- Build a functional, integrated technology system, incorporating the use of Benefit Enrollment and Coordination of Services (BECS)
- Work with local partners to enhance regional transportation services
- Grow flexible funding
- Enhance marketing and communications to potential clientele

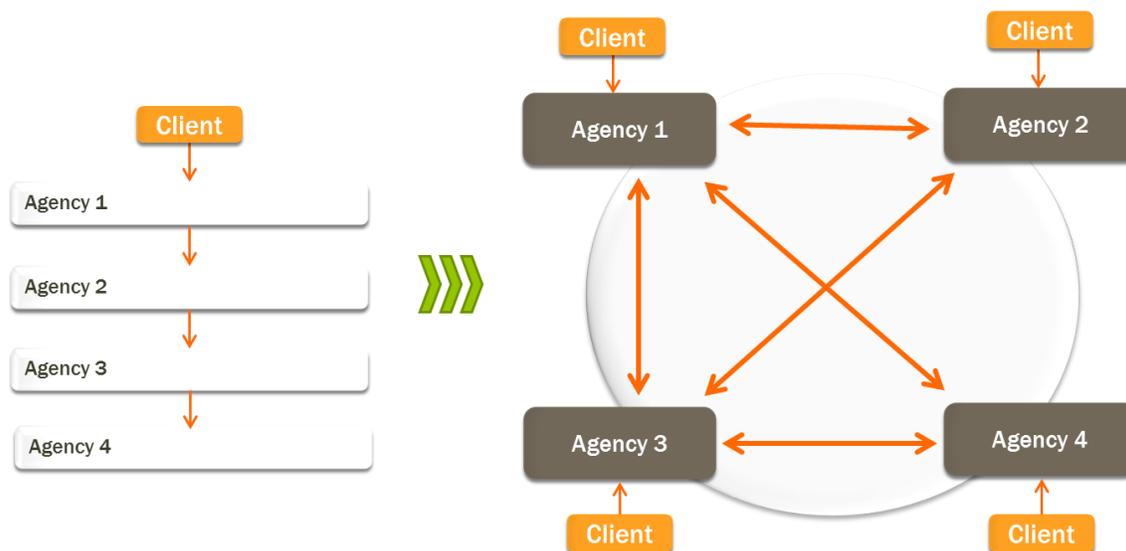
To achieve an adaptive and flexible client service approach at WCAC, program staff goals are to:

- Develop two-way relational approach to service delivery resulting in empowered, self-sufficient clientele
- Adopt a supportive case management approach and staffing to help support client utilization of the broad array of services

### Strategy 2: Community Network of Service Providers

WCAC's second strategy is to develop a formal network of service providers that serve the same or similar clients and create a structure for easier access to holistic delivery. As depicted in Figure 5, clients currently move in isolation from one agency to the next, creating a daunting and often time-consuming social service system. WCAC envisions increased activity among agencies that results in a more accessible, seamless, and collaborative system and removes barriers for clients to receive services.

**Fig. 5 Strategy 2**



To explore this model, WCAC's goals are to:

- Build a knowledge proficiency in other models for client-centered community response
- Seek willing partners with an entrepreneurial spirit
- Work with the network to clarify the strengths, weaknesses, and strategic advantages of network partners and structure processes for linking service delivery and easing access to and among providers
- Realign the WCAC's management structures to accommodate plan succession and allow time to strengthening external community ties
- Engage in ongoing discussions with the Board of Directors

## XI. CONCLUSION

This is a time for community action agencies to be nimble, as national, regional, state, and local issues affect our most vulnerable populations. Based on survey responses from staff and customers, conversations with local leaders and community residents, along with secondary data, WCAC is excited to test and thoughtfully analyze programs, staffing, available funding, and appropriate collaborators as it embraces forward thinking and action.

WCAC will expand the management team's involvement in external communications and relationship building, especially in Southbridge, where poverty statistics continue to soar above the Commonwealth's averages. The agency will work to secure additional resources for the community and advocate for extending its designated service area. WCAC anticipates providing improved and necessary services to areas of greatest need by working closely with MASSCAP and the Department of Housing and Community Development to help with the re-evaluation of the 50-year-old formula for federal CSBG funding.

WCAC is poised for change in a positive direction, a position reflected in the agency's 2014 theme: *Future Focused!* We are confident that through our dedication to improving programs and increasing accessibility, we will create a strong community network of support for those living in poverty and give thousands the opportunity to stabilize their lives for a better future.

# APPENDIX A: Works Cited

# APPENDIX B:

## WCAC

### Service Area & Maps

# APPENDIX C: Selected Census Data for WCAC Service Area

# APPENDIX D:

## Client Survey

## Instruments

(English, Spanish,  
Vietnamese, Arabic)

# APPENDIX E:

# Client Survey

# Results

# APPENDIX F:

## Staff Survey Instrument

# APPENDIX G:

## Staff Survey Results

# APPENDIX H:

## Focus Group Minutes

# APPENDIX I:

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

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## Cuts Leave Many Out In Cold

From: Worcester Telegram and Gazette, December 8, 1995



Theresa L. Gendreau sits near her stove, the only source of heat in her apartment. Her 17-year-old cat, Sheba, sits in its "warming box" next to the stove.

# Cuts leave many out in cold

By Winston W. Wiley  
Telegram & Gazette Staff

Theresa L. Gendreau tries not to think about what she will do if the thermometer continues to drop.

The 66-year-old Southbridge resident already has closed off all but two rooms of her six-room duplex apartment and wears as many layers of clothing indoors as outdoors. Sunny days help, raising the temperature in her

kitchen and bedroom a few degrees when it's cold. But even then, the thermometer rarely tops 65 degrees.

"I hate to say it; I don't want to say it. I don't even want to think it. I know I can't hold down a job. I would have to take some help from my son," said Gendreau, a social security and disability benefit recipient who has been denied fuel assistance for the first time in 10 years.

Gendreau is among thousands

of Massachusetts residents who qualify for fuel assistance, but are being turned away because of continued budget uncertainties in Washington, D.C. Thousands more have seen their total fuel subsidy drop to less than one-third the level of previous years, and with winter still two weeks away already have exhausted those one-time allotments.

### WHAT TO DO

"We are starting to get calls from people and the question is,

what are we supposed to do?" said Meredith A. Lindquist, director of the fuel assistance program of Worcester Community Action Council. "Unfortunately, I don't have answers. What they are doing at this point in the winter time with no heat, I don't know."

As much as Gendreau, a retired teacher who now does volunteer work with children and senior citizens, dreads exercising her

Turn to CRISIS/Back of Section

# Crisis keeps heat low

Continued From Page One

option of accepting help from her son, she counts herself among the fortunate.

"There are a lot of people who are worse off than me," she said. "The stories I hear would shock you."

For now, Gendreau has been able to preserve her independence by heating only two rooms and "scrimping on food money to pay the gas company because you don't want to lose your credit, especially when it has been good all your life."

The law prohibits gas companies from shutting off residential utilities during cold weather months. That's why Gendreau and most other utility company customers eligible for fuel assistance in past years have, so far, been denied this year.

## EMERGENCY CASES PROCESSED

Lindquist said only those whose heating fuels are delivered, cash on delivery, and emergency cases are being processed until WCAC has a firmer grasp of what, if any, funding Congress will approve for the program this year.

The U.S. House has recommended spending zilch for the program that last year supplemented the heating costs of more than 140,000 low-income Massachusetts households. The U.S. Senate has recommended spending about \$700 million.

Meanwhile, the WCAC program has gotten one-twelfth of 75 percent of last year's appropriation of \$3.6 million while the Republican-led Congress and President Clinton lock horns over budget priorities.

Gendreau said she foresaw the current fuel assistance crisis and in September began gathering more than 200 signatures on a petition which was sent to Clinton. Clinton stuck to his guns and did not allow Republican-proposed cuts in fuel assistance and other programs to pass.

"I'm totally alarmed at the way this has been going on back and forth, not just for myself, but for all those who are eligible," she said.

## FUEL BILL DOUBLED

Gendreau, who suffers from a se-

vere kidney ailment, said with fuel assistance eligibility, her heating bill this time of year was usually no more than \$45 a month to heat her entire apartment. But without fuel assistance, which is paid directly to the utility company, she was socked with a \$99.75 bill to heat just two rooms.

The penny-wise, pound-foolish approach to balancing the budget in the long run will cost taxpayers more in shelters, emergency-room visits and wasted potential among children unable to concentrate in school because of the condition of their home life, Lindquist said.

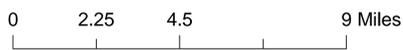
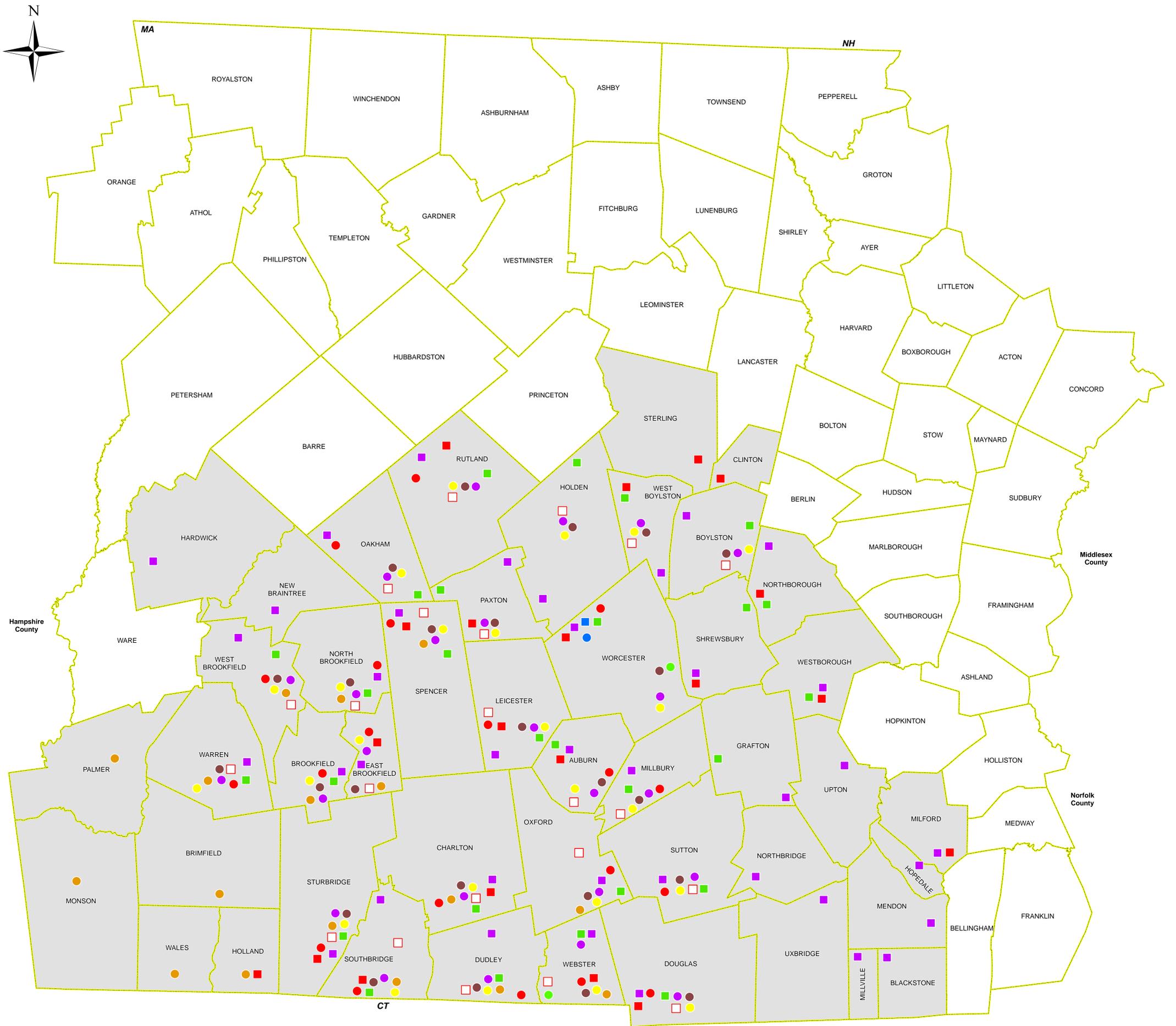
Although the federal government maintains a \$600 million contingency fund to help low-income people with heating costs, that money is used only in extremely harsh blizzard or disaster conditions, Lindquist said.

"Consequently, you have to wish disastrous conditions on people in order to be able to help them," she said. "Quite frankly, it's ridiculous."

## WCAC Service Area Chart

Service Category		Energy				Youth & Family Development			Education & Employment			Asset Development		
		Fuel Assistance	Weather-ization	HEARTWAP	AMP	Healthy Families	Head Start/ Early Head Start	Project Excel	WINGS	Youth-works	IDA	EITC	SNAP	
1	Worcester	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
2	Auburn	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		
3	Blackstone								X					
4	Boylston	X	X	X			X		X		X			
5	Brimfield					X								
6	Brookfield	X	X	X	X	X			X		X			
7	Charlton	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		
8	Clinton											X		
9	Douglas	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		
10	Dudley	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			
11	East Brookfield	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X		
12	Grafton								X		X			
13	Hardwick								X					
14	Holden	X	X	X			X		X		X	X		
15	Holland					X						X		
16	Hopedale								X					
17	Leicester	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		
18	Mendon								X					
19	Milford								X			X		
20	Millbury	X	X	X	X		X		X		X			
21	Millville								X					
22	Monson					X								
23	New Braintree								X					
24	North Brookfield	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			
25	Northborough								X		X	X		
26	Northbridge								X					
27	Oakham	X	X	X	X		X		X		X			
28	Oxford	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			
29	Palmer					X								
30	Paxton	X	X	X			X		X		X	X		
31	Rutland	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		
32	Shrewsbury								X		X	X		
33	Southbridge	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		
34	Spencer	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		
35	Sterling											X		
36	Sturbridge	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		
37	Sutton	X	X	X	X		X		X		X			
38	Upton								X					
39	Uxbridge								X					
40	Wales					X								
41	Warren	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			
42	Webster	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
43	West Boylston	X	X	X			X		X		X	X		
44	West Brookfield	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X			
45	Westborough								X		X	X		

# Worcester Community Action Council, Inc. Programs



- Legend**
- Town Boundaries
  - WCAC
  - No Services
  - AMP
  - EITC
  - Fuel Assistance
  - Head Start & Early Head Start
  - Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County
  - HEARTWAP
  - Individual Development Account
  - Project Excel
  - Summer Youth Employment
  - Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program
  - Weatherization
  - WINGS



Information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. This information is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis. Use caution interpreting positional accuracy.

Source: Data provided by the Community Action Council, Inc. (WCAC Programs current as of June 2014), the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), massDOT and the Office of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Information Technology Division.



## WCAC Client Survey (English)

1. What service did you receive at WCAC today?

2. What program(s) are you enrolled in? **Check all that apply.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel Assistance   | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate Deleading Training                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weatherization  | <input type="checkbox"/> HiSET (formerly GED)                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Grid energy Wise + LEAN Multi-Family                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Readiness Training                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HEARTWAP (Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Program) | <input type="checkbox"/> YouthWorks (summer or year-round program)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)              | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AGO HomeCorps Borrower Recovery Initiative                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HomeBASE  | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Head Start                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)                               | <input type="checkbox"/> IDA (Individual Development Account)          |

3. How satisfied are you with the services you receive at WCAC? Check one:

- I like them a lot all of the time  
 I am satisfied most of the time  
 I have issues with the services I am receiving  
 I am really disappointed with WCAC services

If you are disappointed with your service, please tell us why. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Read the whole list below and then check **five** needs that are most pressing for you or your family:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Getting a good education and graduating from high school | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency financial assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job training   | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable food                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Services for disabled          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health resources        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable healthcare                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol abuse resources        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services for immigrants                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug abuse resources           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to childcare                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Assisted living services       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment opportunities                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable heat and utilities  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence resources                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with legal issues   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Help managing money            |

5. What city or town do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Is your age?

- Less than 19       19 – 24       25 – 40       Over 40

Thank you for your valuable feedback!

## Selected Census Data for WCAC Service Area

	Massachusetts	Worcester County	City of Worcester	Auburn	Blackstone	Boylston	Brimfield	Brookfield	Charlton	Clinton	Douglas
<b>Demographics</b>											
Total Population	6,560,595	799,277	181,473	16,221	9,026	4,341	3,610	3,378	12,947	13,618	8,432
Change in Population 2000-2012	3.3%	6.4%	5.8%	4.5%	2.5%	8.3%	8.1%	10.7%	14.9%	1.3%	19.7%
White	84.3%	89.1%	75.8%	96.0%	97.4%	94.7%	100.0%	98.5%	97.4%	87.0%	98.5%
Black	7.1%	4.2%	11.3%	1.6%	0.2%	0.2%	-	-	-	2.6%	0.4%
Other Races	5.9%	4.4%	9.2%	1.2%	1.0%	3.6%	-	1.3%	1.4%	7.7%	0.2%
Two or more races	2.7%	2.4%	3.6%	1.2%	1.0%	1.5%	-	0.8%	1.2%	2.7%	0.9%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	9.6%	9.4%	20.0%	2.8%	1.0%	3.6%	0.3%	0.1%	3.6%	12.9%	0.8%
Veterans in population	7.8%	9.1%	7.3%	8.3%	8.1%	5.0%	12.8%	10.2%	2.7%	6.6%	7.1%
Foreign Born	14.8%	11.1%	20.7%	6.1%	4.0%	7.6%	1.8%	-	3.3%	11.2%	1.8%
Language other than English at home	21.7%	17.8%	33.9%	7.5%	6.7%	9.6%	3.5%	0.8%	5.1%	17.2%	4.8%
<b>Poverty</b>											
Poverty Rate	11.9%	11.8%	20.1%	6.2%	3.9%	1.3%	4.4%	2.6%	4.8%	9.5%	3.4%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	3.5%	3.5%	1.7%	2.9%	0.2%	-1.5%	-	-5.4%	-0.8%	0.1%	-1.2%
Families in Poverty	11.5%	10.7%	16.0%	3.2%	1.5%	-	1.8%	1.9%	4.0%	7.2%	0.5%
Married Couple Families	28.3%	26.7%	4.9%	2.6%	0.3%	-	-	1.0%	3.1%	1.8%	0.6%
Families w/ Female Householder	62.4%	63.3%	36.3%	6.8%	7.6%	-	11.8%	11.1%	9.8%	27.1%	-
Child Poverty Rate (persons under 18)	15.4%	15.1%	29.0%	8.7%	5.2%	1.4%	3.9%	1.1%	4.4%	13.4%	1.6%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	3.9%	4.3%	3.9%	5.2%	3.0%	1.0%	3.5%	-3.8%	0.1%	8.0%	-2.8%
Seniors in Poverty (persons over 65)	9.3%	8.7%	15.0%	3.9%	5.8%	-	3.6%	4.1%	3.2%	11.9%	4.4%
Households Receiving SNAP	10.66%	11.2%	20.4%	5.4%	4.6%	3.0%	8.8%	2.9%	3.4%	10.8%	5.9%
<b>Employment</b>											
Civilian Population in Labor Force	3,473,753	400,911	93,305	9,220	5,240	2,512	2,195	1,759	7,165	8,143	5,286
Unemployment Rate	6.7%	7.4%	10.8%	6.3%	6.1%	1.1%	8.5%	2.9%	6.7%	7.7%	10.6%
Median Annual Household Income	\$66,658	\$62,318	\$45,679	\$73,068	\$74,042	\$94,676	\$79,891	\$62,209	\$95,058	\$66,308	\$81,073
Per Capita Income	\$35,485	\$31,609	\$24,470	\$33,347	\$32,808	\$53,898	\$33,625	\$28,619	\$34,114	\$30,567	\$34,705
<b>Educational Attainment (for persons over 25)</b>											
No High School Diploma	10.9%	11.0%	15.9%	8.8%	9.0%	4.9%	8.1%	7.1%	8.3%	12.8%	5.3%
High School Only	25.9%	28.4%	28.3%	31.6%	32.5%	21.1%	25.7%	41.3%	28.8%	29.3%	31.5%
Some College or Associates Degree	24.3%	27.0%	26.0%	28.8%	30.6%	23.5%	25.7%	27.5%	29.5%	25.9%	30.7%
Bachelors Degree	22.2%	20.7%	18.4%	19.4%	18.2%	27.7%	34.3%	17.8%	22.5%	21.3%	22.5%
Graduate or Professional Degree	16.8%	13.0%	11.4%	11.3%	8.9%	22.7%	6.1%	6.2%	10.9%	10.8%	10.2%

State of MA and Worcester County data retrieved from: <http://www.communityactioncna.org/tool/ReportCard/reportData.aspx> on March 25, 2014.

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## Selected Census Data for WCAC Service Area

	Dudley	East Brookfield	Grafton	Hardwick	Holden	Holland	Hopedale	Leicester	Mendon	Milford	Millville	Millbury
<b>Demographics</b>												
Total Population	11,401	2,152	17,692	2,971	17,361	2,481	5,911	10,988	5,827	28,002	3,190	13,270
Change in Population 2000-2012	13.6%	-	18.8%	13.3%	10.0%	3.0%	-	4.7%	10.2%	4.3%	17.1%	6.8%
White	93.3%	96.8%	87.5%	92.0%	95.6%	96.9%	97.8%	95.9%	96.7%	88.6%	95.1%	96.1%
Black	2.3%	1.0%	1.5%	1.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%	1.2%	0.3%	1.7%	1.6%	0.8%
Other Races	1.0%	-	9.0%	2.8%	3.6%	1.2%	2.0%	2.6%	1.9%	7.5%	0.8%	2.1%
Two or more races	3.4%	2.2%	1.6%	3.8%	0.5%	1.2%	0.0%	0.4%	1.2%	2.3%	2.4%	1.0%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	3.9%	-	3.1%	4.0%	1.8%	2.3%	1.2%	5.2%	4.6%	9.5%	1.6%	4.1%
Veterans in population	7.9%	7.0%	5.1%	11.5%	6.5%	11.3%	4.7%	9.4%	5.4%	5.9%	5.6%	6.9%
Foreign Born	7.8%	-	9.8%	2.0%	6.9%	2.1%	5.0%	7.3%	5.4%	18.5%	3.0%	3.7%
Language other than English at home	9.8%	0.8%	14.2%	4.9%	8.5%	3.9%	8.2%	10.8%	6.4%	8.1%	6.7%	7.9%
<b>Poverty</b>												
Poverty Rate	7.0%	6.7%	6.3%	15.9%	2.8%	7.3%	2.3%	4.5%	2.1%	10.1%	8.7%	6.3%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	1.4%	2.8%	0.7%	8.4%	-0.3%	-	-1.7%	0.2%	-1.9%	2.9%	2.9%	-2.0%
Families in Poverty	7.1%	5.2%	3.0%	15.3%	1.4%	1.7%	1.3%	3.0%	1.2%	8.1%	6.7%	4.0%
Married Couple Families	2.6%	3.2%	1.2%	8.5%	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%	5.0%	2.2%	2.5%
Families w/ Female Householder	23.1%	15.6%	11.9%	39.6%	4.5%	0.0%	7.7%	8.5%	7.4%	25.4%	20.3%	9.6%
Child Poverty Rate (persons under 18)	10.9%	5.9%	6.0%	22.2%	3.1%	2.1%	2.7%	1.3%	2.7%	15.8%	9.2%	6.7%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	6.7%	2.3%	0.4%	16.5%	-0.2%	-7.1%	-	-3.0%	-0.7%	6.9%	2.6%	-1.5%
Seniors in Poverty (persons over 65)	1.6%	9.8%	8.7%	4.8%	5.1%	8.6%	5.7%	8.1%	3.8%	8.3%	9.5%	5.2%
Households Receiving SNAP	6.9%	4.2%	7.0%	11.8%	2.6%	8.1%	2.5%	8.3%	3.3%	7.2%	10.6%	6.9%
<b>Employment</b>												
Civilian Population in Labor Force	6,529	1,233	9,691	1,523	9,772	1,514	3,306	6,615	3,187	16,026	1,761	7,788
Unemployment Rate	8.8%	9.5%	6.6%	11.2%	7.0%	7.5%	5.6%	8.1%	5.4%	7.4%	6.5%	7.8%
Median Annual Household Income	\$70,513	\$62,202	\$90,269	\$59,432	\$93,680	\$69,097	\$98,902	\$72,000	\$71,164	\$69,151	\$73,611	\$73,341
Per Capita Income	\$28,392	\$29,233	\$39,490	\$31,499	\$40,293	\$31,824	\$40,170	\$31,672	\$39,480	\$32,078	\$27,322	\$33,890
<b>Educational Attainment (for persons over 25)</b>												
No High School Diploma	8.2%	7.1%	5.2%	8.1%	4.5%	7.6%	6.0%	11.5%	3.4%	9.9%	14.3%	8.7%
High School Only	29.9%	40.8%	21.6%	36.5%	18.0%	33.0%	25.5%	33.0%	20.6%	29.5%	33.0%	33.9%
Some College or Associates Degree	33.8%	26.7%	21.0%	22.4%	25.2%	31.0%	22.3%	30.0%	30.1%	24.3%	29.7%	28.8%
Bachelors Degree	19.0%	18.5%	32.9%	12.7%	29.0%	21.6%	34.0%	17.0%	29.7%	24.1%	15.0%	19.1%
Graduate or Professional Degree	9.1%	6.9%	19.3%	20.2%	23.4%	6.9%	12.2%	8.5%	16.3%	12.2%	8.0%	9.4%

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## Selected Census Data for WCAC Service Area

	Monson	New Braintree	North Brookfield	North-borough	North-bridge	Oakham	Oxford	Palmer	Paxton	Rutland	Shrewsbury	South-bridge
<b>Demographics</b>												
Total Population	8,580	1,084	4,681	14,407	15,661	1,796	13,713	12,519	4,812	7,967	35,583	16,775
Change in Population 2000-2012	2.6%	16.9%	-	2.8%	18.8%	7.4%	2.7%	n/a	9.7%	25.4%	12.5%	n/a
White	97.2%	99.3%	95.9%	87.4%	96.1%	99.5%	95.5%	97.8%	86.4%	93.3%	78.0%	81.6%
Black	0.9%	0.2%	1.1%	1.0%	0.4%	-	0.4%	0.5%	4.2%	1.6%	2.2%	3.0%
Other Races	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%	9.4%	1.6%	0.2%	1.4%	0.1%	7.8%	4.4%	17.2%	12.0%
Two or more races	1.3%	0.0%	2.9%	2.2%	1.9%	0.3%	2.6%	1.6%	1.7%	0.7%	2.6%	3.4%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	2.8%	0.7%	0.8%	4.0%	2.7%	1.1%	2.7%	1.9%	8.9%	4.1%	2.8%	32.2%
Veterans in population	8.3%	7.2%	8.2%	4.9%	8.5%	8.5%	7.4%	9.8%	7.6%	11.0%	6.5%	6.8%
Foreign Born	2.0%	1.0%	2.1%	12.2%	4.7%	4.7%	2.5%	1.8%	7.2%	5.1%	18.2%	7.3%
Language other than English at home	3.2%	4.2%	4.3%	16.1%	7.4%	7.4%	5.3%	5.1%	13.3%	6.6%	22.3%	35.8%
<b>Poverty</b>												
Poverty Rate	9.1%	5.2%	6.7%	1.7%	4.2%	5.0%	5.1%	10.3%	4.5%	4.6%	4.5%	16.1%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	3.5%	0.6%	1.2%	-1.3%	-1.1%	3.1%	-2.7%	n/a	2.7%	1.3%	-0.3%	n/a
Families in Poverty	4.8%	3.2%	3.7%	0.7%	2.7%	3.1%	3.8%	6.3%	4.4%	2.7%	2.3%	12.9%
Married Couple Families	2.4%	2.6%	-	0.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.1%	1.6%	2.2%	2.2%	1.3%	2.9%
Families w/ Female Householder	30.8%	13.0%	12.5%	0.0%	7.6%	13.2%	16.3%	17.9%	0.0%	-	10.5%	35.9%
Child Poverty Rate (persons under 18)	6.8%	8.5%	8.1%	0.7%	3.6%	5.4%	6.5%	9.8%	8.0%	4.9%	4.5%	23.3%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	-	5.0%	0.3%	-1.1%	-1.3%	3.6%	-6.0%	n/a	8.0%	2.9%	-0.1%	n/a
Seniors in Poverty (persons over 65)	6.3%	3.8%	9.4%	4.6%	6.4%	7.6%	4.0%	5.3%	6.3%	6.3%	8.5%	12.3%
Households Receiving SNAP	8.8%	5.9%	6.9%	4.3%	7.8%	6.8%	8.5%	14.3%	3.0%	5.9%	4.1%	25.9%
<b>Employment</b>												
Civilian Population in Labor Force	4,927	607	2,563	8,088	8,843	1,087	8,221	6,595	2,569	4,492	19,206	8,339
Unemployment Rate	9.3%	6.4%	6.1%	6.2%	9.3%	9.0%	7.3%	11.8%	4.0%	9.4%	6.3%	11.0%
Median Annual Household Income	\$65,494	\$85,625	\$58,349	\$103,506	\$66,784	\$83,519	\$67,839	\$50,050	\$107,533	\$86,453	\$92,006	\$46,955
Per Capita Income	\$31,612	\$32,996	\$28,463	\$46,717	\$33,274	\$32,429	\$30,275	\$26,884	\$36,414	\$31,804	\$39,351	\$22,331
<b>Educational Attainment (for persons over 25)</b>												
No High School Diploma	9.1%	6.0%	11.2%	3.3%	8.8%	4.8%	6.9%	12.2%	4.0%	3.7%	5.9%	19.6%
High School Only	31.3%	36.4%	41.5%	16.3%	32.8%	25.5%	34.6%	39.8%	17.7%	25.7%	17.7%	38.5%
Some College or Associates Degree	29.5%	26.0%	26.4%	21.6%	29.6%	33.0%	32.8%	28.9%	28.1%	30.0%	20.6%	24.9%
Bachelors Degree	19.5%	19.4%	11.5%	35.0%	17.4%	20.7%	30.1%	12.7%	26.4%	24.5%	29.6%	10.6%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10.5%	12.2%	9.4%	23.7%	11.5%	16.1%	7.3%	6.5%	23.8%	16.1%	26.3%	6.4%

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## Selected Census Data for WCAC Service Area

	Spencer	Sterling	Sturbridge	Sutton	Upton	Uxbridge	Wales	Warren	Webster	West Boylston	West Brookfield	West- borough
<b>Demographics</b>												
Total Population	Spencer	7,808	9,230	8,964	7,485	13,382	1,990	5,116	16,760	7,697	3,718	18,345
Change in Population 2000-2012	-	7.6%	17.8%	8.7%	33.0%	20.0%	12.8%	7.1%	2.1%	2.9%	-2.3%	1.9%
White	94.8%	97.4%	96.3%	99.4%	94.9%	97.6%	97.7%	98.4%	89.5%	89.9%	94.3%	73.4%
Black	0.7%	1.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.0%	2.9%	5.7%	2.6%	2.9%
Other Races	2.4%	0.9%	2.2%	0.5%	1.6%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	4.5%	3.4%	2.5%	20.3%
Two or more races	2.1%	0.7%	1.3%	0.0%	3.3%	0.7%	1.2%	1.1%	3.2%	1.0%	0.6%	3.4%
Hispanic/Latino (of any race)	4.1%	1.6%	4.0%	0.5%	0.7%	0.8%	0.2%	0.6%	3.6%	6.2%	0.0%	5.5%
Veterans in population	10.7%	5.8%	7.3%	8.5%	4.2%	8.1%	11.6%	8.9%	8.1%	8.1%	7.7%	4.7%
Foreign Born	2.4%	3.2%	4.5%	4.3%	3.5%	3.4%	3.1%	4.5%	7.5%	3.1%	4.2%	21.6%
Language other than English at home	7.2%	4.8%	6.1%	5.7%	5.2%	4.6%	2.7%	4.8%	13.4%	7.2%	7.0%	28.0%
<b>Poverty</b>												
Poverty Rate	7.8%	2.2%	9.0%	2.6%	4.9%	6.0%	7.6%	8.7%	14.0%	4.1%	5.2%	3.1%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	-0.8%	0.7%	2.9%	-1.8%	1.4%	1.3%	4.1%	2.6%	3.0%	0.9%	-1.6%	-1.6%
Families in Poverty	2.8%	0.9%	7.6%	1.4%	2.3%	4.0%	4.9%	6.7%	11.3%	3.0%	1.6%	2.0%
Married Couple Families	1.3%	-	1.7%	0.0%	1.9%	1.2%	2.2%	3.0%	3.5%	0.0%	0.6%	1.4%
Families w/ Female Householder	10.3%	7.3%	43.2%	15.2%	0.0%	13.5%	25.0%	15.0%	35.5%	24.0%	0.0%	8.8%
Child Poverty Rate (persons under 18)	3.9%	0.0%	13.7%	5.1%	3.2%	7.1%	6.2%	8.2%	21.3%	3.0%	3.3%	2.8%
Change in Rate 2000-2012	-6.3%	-4.5%	2.4%	-0.1%	-0.9%	2.1%	3.0%	1.9%	8.6%	-0.2%	-6.6%	-0.4%
Seniors in Poverty (persons over 65)	10.5%	5.0%	6.7%	1.2%	12.2%	5.3%	7.6%	1.6%	9.8%	1.0%	9.4%	1.6%
Households Receiving SNAP	10.7%	3.4%	5.8%	4.1%	4.0%	3.5%	6.4%	11.4%	16.5%	2.7%	4.2%	4.5%
<b>Employment</b>												
Civilian Population in Labor Force	6,542	4,328	4,749	5,175	4,206	7,707	1,174	2,463	9,266	3,136	2,246	9,705
Unemployment Rate	10.0%	3.8%	5.6%	2.3%	8.6%	7.2%	9.5%	10.4%	10.2%	7.9%	8.6%	4.9%
Median Annual Household Income	\$59,359	\$102,847	\$83,375	\$112,286	\$115,625	\$83,194	\$61,118	\$42,422	\$48,822	\$75,250	\$66,414	\$97,535
Per Capita Income	\$30,321	\$42,211	\$36,770	\$44,242	\$45,632	\$34,683	\$30,818	\$29,029	\$26,676	\$30,102	\$30,599	\$46,182
<b>Educational Attainment (for persons over 25)</b>												
No High School Diploma	13.3%	4.3%	5.0%	7.0%	2.7%	7.0%	6.7%	13.6%	16.7%	11.8%	10.5%	6.1%
High School Only	30.3%	21.8%	21.4%	27.5%	17.5%	32.5%	46.3%	33.9%	36.1%	27.9%	37.6%	12.3%
Some College or Associates Degree	33.3%	21.5%	32.9%	24.2%	28.5%	28.3%	27.4%	34.3%	28.4%	27.3%	23.6%	17.4%
Bachelors Degree	15.0%	30.1%	24.3%	27.8%	32.0%	20.4%	14.2%	15.1%	12.9%	21.3%	20.4%	33.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	8.2%	22.2%	16.4%	13.5%	19.4%	11.8%	5.3%	3.1%	6.0%	11.6%	7.8%	30.6%

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## WCAC Client Survey (Spanish)

1. ¿Qué servicio recibió hoy en WCAC?

2. ¿En qué programa(s) está inscrito? **Marque todos lo que correspondan.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda de combustible (Fuel Assistance)   | <input type="checkbox"/> EITC (Crédito Tributario por Ingreso del Trabajo)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climatización (Weatherization)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Capacitación para eliminar pintura de plomo de riesgo moderado (Moderate Deleading Training) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Wise + LEAN Multi-Family de National Grid   | <input type="checkbox"/> HiSET (anteriormente llamado GED)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HEARTWAP (Programa de Tareas de Modernización de la Ayuda de Emergencia con Calefacción) | <input type="checkbox"/> Capacitación de preparación para el trabajo  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP (Programa de Asistencia Nutricional Suplementaria)                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> YouthWorks (programa de verano o de todo el año)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iniciativa HomeCorps de Recuperación para Prestatarios del Procurador General (AGO)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Families del sur del condado de Worcester  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HomeBASE   | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IDA (Cuenta de Desarrollo Individual)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Head Start   |

3. ¿Qué tan satisfecho está con los servicios que recibe en WCAC? Marque uno:

- Estoy siempre muy satisfecho
- Estoy satisfecho la mayoría de las veces
- Tengo problemas con los servicios que estoy recibiendo
- Estoy realmente decepcionado con los servicios de WCAC

Si está decepcionado con el servicio recibido, díganos por qué. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Lea toda la lista que aparece a continuación y marque **cinco** necesidades que sean las más importantes para usted y su familia:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recibir una buena educación y graduarse de la escuela secundaria | <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda económica de emergencia                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capacitación para el empleo                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Comida al alcance del bolsillo                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transporte   | <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para discapacitados                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vivienda económica   | <input type="checkbox"/> Recursos para salud mental                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cuidado de salud económico                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Recursos para abuso de alcohol                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para inmigrantes                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Recursos para abuso de drogas                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acceso al cuidado de niños                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para vivienda asistida                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oportunidades de empleo  | <input type="checkbox"/> Calefacción y servicios públicos al alcance del bolsillo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recursos para violencia doméstica                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con problemas legales                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otro: _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda para manejar el dinero                             |

5. ¿En qué ciudad o pueblo vive? \_\_\_\_\_

6. ¿Cuántos años tiene?

- Menos de 19       19-24       25-40       Más de 40

Gracias por su participación!

## WCAC Client Survey (Vietnamese)

Những phục vụ gì quý vị được phục vụ tại WCAC hôm nay?

Những chương trình gì quý vị đăng ký? Đánh dấu tất cả nếu có.

- Trợ giúp tiền sưởi
- Giữ nhà tốt hơn bởi thời tiết
- National Grid năng lượng Wise + LEAN Multi-Family LEAN nhiều gia đình
- Hỗ trợ khẩn cấp sưởi ấm (HEARTWAP)
- Chương trình hỗ trợ dinh dưỡng (SNAP)
- Chương trình vay mượn và phục hồi
- HomeBASE
- Tài khoản cá nhân phát triển (IDA)
- Khai thuế (EITC)
- Huấn luyện tẩy sơn chì
- Bằng tốt nghiệp bổ túc
- Huấn luyện sẵn sàng công việc
- Công việc cho thanh thiếu niên (chương trình cho mùa hè hoặc cả năm)
- Gia đình khoẻ mạnh vùng miền Nam Worcester
- Chương trình mẫu giáo
- Chương trình trước mẫu giáo

Quý vị hài lòng như thế nào với phục vụ tại WCAC? Đánh dấu một ô:

- Tôi thích họ rất nhiều tất cả mọi lần
- Tôi hài lòng hầu như tất cả mọi lần
- Tôi có vấn đề với phục vụ tôi nhận
- Tôi rất thất vọng với phục vụ tại WCAC

Nếu quý vị thất vọng với phục vụ của chúng tôi, xin vui nói cho chúng tôi tại sao \_\_\_\_\_

Đọc toàn bộ danh sách dưới đây và sau đó đánh dấu năm nhu cầu mà cấp bách nhất cho quý vị hay gia đình của quý vị:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nhận được một nền giáo dục tốt và tốt nghiệp trung học | <input type="checkbox"/> Thực phẩm giá cả phải chăng          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> đào tạo nghề   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dịch vụ cho người khuyết tật         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giao thông vận tải                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nguồn lực sức khỏe tâm thần          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nhà ở giá rẻ   | <input type="checkbox"/> Nguồn lực lạm dụng rượu              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bảo hiểm y tế giá rẻ                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Nguồn lực lạm dụng ma túy            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dịch vụ cho người nhập cư                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Dịch vụ trợ giúp sinh sống           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Truy cập vào chăm sóc trẻ                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Nhiệt và các tiện ích giá phải chăng |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cơ hội việc làm  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hỗ trợ các vấn đề pháp lý            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Giúp đỡ bạo lực gia đình                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Giúp quản lý tiền bạc                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hỗ trợ tài chính khẩn cấp                              |   |

Khác: \_\_\_\_\_

Quý vị sống ở thành phố hay thị xã nào? \_\_\_\_\_

Tuổi của quý vị?

- Less than 19
- 19 – 24
- 25 – 40
- Over 40

مجلس العمل الاجتماعي في مدينة وستر

أستبيان العميل

ماهي الخدمة التي تلقيتها من مجلس العمل الاجتماعي اليوم؟

ماهو البرنامج الذي انت مسجل فيه؟ تحقق وضع اشارة في كل ماينطبق أدناه:

- برنامج مساعدات الوقود.
- برنامج وضع الحلول للحماية من الطقس.
- برنامج تخفيض تكلفة أسعار الشبكة الوطنية للطاقة + مساعدة العوائل ذات الدخل المحدود.
- برنامج العمل التحديثي لمساعدات التدفئة في حالة الطوارئ.
- البرنامج التكميلي للمساعدات الغذائية (البطاقة الغذائية).
- برنامج مبادرة استرداد المنح للمقترضين.
- برنامج المساعدات الطارئة لتأمين المسكن والخدمات.
- برنامج تنمية الحساب للافراد.
- برنامج أنتمان ضريبة للدخل المكتسب.
- برنامج تدريبي لطرد مادة الرصاص.
- برنامج تنمية القوى العاملة حتى بلوغهم للاعتماد الدراسة الثانوية(جي اي دي).
- برنامج تدريب الجاهزية للعمل.
- برنامج عمل الشباب (صيفي او سنوي – طول السنة).
- برنامج صحة العوائل في مقاطعة جنوب وستر.
- برنامج الرعاية الاولية تشجيعي للاستعداد للمدرسة للاعمار من حديثي الولادة الى خمس سنوات .
- برنامج الرعاية الاولية المبكرة.

## WCAC Client Survey (Arabic)

مامدى رضاك عن الخدمات التي تتلقاها من مجلس العمل الاجتماعي في ومدينة  
وستر ؟ ضع إشارة :

- 1- ارغب بهم كثيرا في جميع الاوقات.
  - 2- انا راض في اغلب الاوقات.
  - 3- لدي مشاكل مع الخدمات التي تردني.
  - 4- انا اشعر بخيبة أمل مع خدمات مجلس العمل الاجتماعي في وستر.
- رجاءا اذا كنت تشعر بخيبة أمل من الخدمات المقدمة اليك, رجاءا أخبرنا لماذا  
وماهي الاسباب.
- 

أقرأ القائمة أدناه وضع إشارة على خمس احتياجات الأكثر أهمية لك او لعائلتك:

- 1- الحصول على تعليم جيد
- 2- تدريب للعمل.
- 3- نقل او مواصلات.
- 4-السكن بأسعار معقولة.
- 5-الرعاية الصحية بأسعار معقولة.
- 6-خدمات للمهاجرين.
- 7-الحصول على رعاية الاطفال.
- 8- فرص العمل.
- 9- خدمات مساعدة المعيشة.
- 10- التدفئة والخدمات بأسعار معقولة.
- 11- بحوث العنف المنزلي.
- 12- المساعدة المالية الطارئة.
- 13- المواد الغذائية بأسعار معقولة.
- 14- خدمات للمعوقين.
- 15- بحوث الصحة العقلية.
- 16- بحوث تعاطي الكحول.
- 17- بحوث تعاطي المخدرات.
- 18- المساعدة في المسائل القانونية.
- 19- مساعدة ادارة الاموال.
- أخرى: \_\_\_\_\_.

في اي مدينة او بلدة تسكن ؟  
هل عمرك ؟

- 1- أقل 19 سنة
  - 2- من 19-24 سنة
  - 3- من 25-40 سنة
  - 4- أكثر من 40 سنة
- سنة

## Client Survey Results

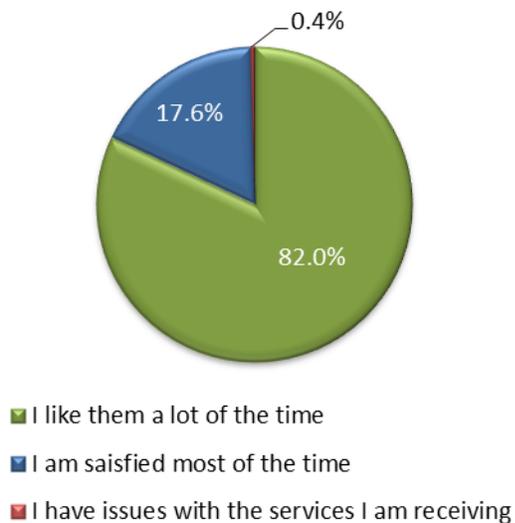
**Q1:** What service did you receive at WCAC today?

No Response	36.7%
Families/Childhood Education	31.9%
Energy	17.3%
Jobs/ Education	8.5%
Asset Development	5.6%

**Q2:** What program(s) are you enrolled in?

Fuel Assistance	45.8%
SNAP	36.1%
Head Start	30.1%
Early Head Start	10.4%
Healthy Families	10.0%
EITC	8.4%
Weatherization	7.2%
Hi-Set	6.8%
YouthWorks	4.0%
Work Readiness Training	3.6%
Natl. Grid Energy Wise & LEAN Multi-Family	3.2%
HomeBASE	3.2%
HEARTWAP	2.4%
Moderate Deleading Training	1.2%
IDA	0.8%
AGO HomeCorps	0.0%

**Q3:** How satisfied are you with the services you receive at WCAC?



*Comments Included:*

- I would like to see Youth Works here in Southbridge.
- I brought my child to school and the reception was great.
- My daughter has broken out of her shell due to the program and the staff.
- I'm very happy, my son is learning a lot and he likes it.
- Thank you for the help I received, it was fast and very necessary.
- Quick service today.
- I did not get weatherization and fuel assistance is inadequate.
- Excellent, polite and helpful.
- Very good but slow.
- Would love assistance with new roof and stove.
- I've been required to bring in the same information more than once.

## Client Survey Results

**Q4:** Read the whole list below and then check the **FIVE** needs that are most pressing for you or your family.

Employment opportunities	49.6%
Affordable heat and utilities	47.9%
Getting a good education/ graduating from HS	40.8%
Affordable housing	40.4%
Affordable food	38.8%
Job training	35.0%
Transportation	34.2%
Affordable healthcare	28.8%
Help managing money	26.7%
Access to childcare	26.3%
Emergency financial assistance	17.1%
Assistance with legal issues	8.8%
Mental health resources	7.9%
Services for immigrants	5.8%
Assisted living services	5.8%
Services for disabled	5.4%
Other (please specify)	5%
Domestic violence resources	2.1%
Alcohol abuse resources	1.7%
Drug abuse resources	1.3%

Top 5 Responses

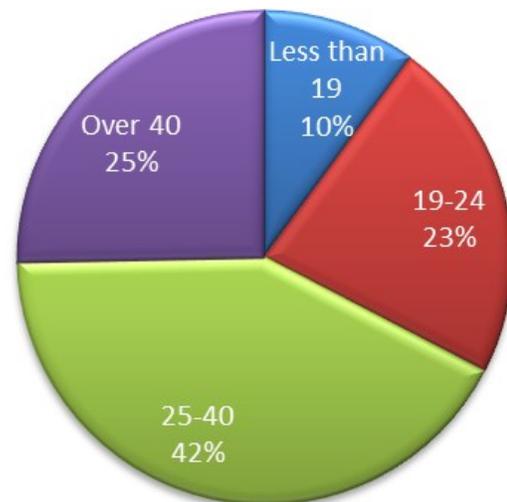
Other responses included:

- language classes
- college degree
- graduating college
- need an occasional babysitter
- masters degree, college
- replacing a failed septic system
- weatherization
- real estate tax help
- jobs for felony records
- learning how to be a mom
- citizenship assistance

**Q5:** What city or town do you live in?

Worcester	37.5%
Southbridge	28.6%
Webster	7.3%
Oxford	6.9%
Millbury	2.7%
Charlton	2.7%
North Brookfield	2.3%
Spencer	1.9%
Warren	1.9%
Dudley	1.5%
Leicester	1.5%
Auburn	1.2%
West Brookfield	1.2%
Sturbridge	0.8%
Douglas	0.4%
Rutland	0.4%
Dorchester	0.4%
Jefferson	0.4%
Palmer	0.4%

**Q6:** What is your age?



## WCAC Staff Survey

The WCAC Strategic Planning Process will help us set a course for the next three years and fulfill our mission. As part of this effort, we're gathering input from all staff members about the issues our clients are facing and the services we provide. Your feedback is very important to the ongoing success of WCAC. Please take a few minutes to give us your evaluation of WCAC's current programs, your work environment, and the needs of your clients. Please complete this survey by **March 21, 2014**.

**WHO SEES THE RESULTS?** Each individual survey will be a *confidential* submission to Nancy Jackson, our Strategic Planning Consultant. The survey is completely anonymous, and no individuals will be identified with their responses. The results will be tabulated and only the cumulative results will be communicated to the Senior Management Team and the Board of Directors.

1. I work in the following area:

- Jobs/ Education (HiSET, work readiness skills, youth employment)
- Energy (LIHEAP, Weatherization, Moderate Deleading Training)
- Asset Development (IDA, EITC, SNAP)
- Strengthening Families/ Childhood Education (Head Start, Early Head Start, Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County)
- Administration

2. I work mostly in the following facility (choose one):

- Denholm Building – 484 Main Street, Worcester, MA
- Southbridge Head Start – 25 Cole Avenue, Southbridge, MA
- Spencer Head Start – 17 Lake Street, Spencer, MA
- Woodward (Oxford) Head Start – 670 Main Street, North Oxford, MA
- Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County – 61 Pine Street, Southbridge, MA

3. Please rate the facility you indicated above by placing an "x" in the appropriate column.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Convenient location				
Adequate parking				
Adequate space to meet with clients				
Privacy with clients				

### SECTION I: CLIENT NEEDS AND WCAC SERVICES

4. Please list the top four issues that you believe affect our customers on a daily basis:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

5. The following is a list of services typically provided to our target population.

## WCAC Staff Survey

Please rank them in their importance to helping people improve the quality of their lives.  
*1= Most Important; 7= Least Important*

Service	Ranking
Safe & Affordable Housing	
Health & Nutrition	
Jobs Training/ Readiness	
Financial Literacy	
Education	
Fuel/Energy/Heating	
Strengthening Youth & Families	

6. Please select the rating for each statement below that best represents your experience by placing an 'x' in the appropriate column. *1= always; 6 = never*

	1	2	3	4	5*	6*
Our range of services meet all of our clients' needs						
My clients know about the range of services we provide						
Within my program our clients are successful in improving the conditions of their lives						
Our target population knows about us and how to access our services						
I can communicate effectively with our clients						

\*Please provide comments for statements with rating of 5 or 6:

8. Besides English, what languages do you hear our customers speaking? Please check all that apply:

- |                                  |                                   |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic   | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish  | <input type="checkbox"/> Swahili    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French  | <input type="checkbox"/> Albanian | <input type="checkbox"/> Khmer   | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ghanaian | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian | <input type="checkbox"/> Other_____ |

## WCAC Staff Survey

9. What other areas in which our clients have needs do you believe WCAC should be addressing, if any?

10. What, or how, could WCAC be doing things differently to meet the needs of the target population?

### SECTION II: EVALUATION OF THE WCAC WORK ENVIRONMENT

11. Please respond to each statement below by placing an “x” in the appropriate column.

WCAC	Always	Most Often	Sometimes	Never
My work is valued by the agency				
The agency treats me with respect				
I can be open and honest within the agency				
I am treated fairly by the agency				
WCAC communicates effectively with its employees				
I feel a sense of pride in being an employee of WCAC				
<b>Program/Department</b>				
I am treated with respect within my program/ dept.				
I can be open and honest with my manager				
I am treated fairly by my manager				
My program/dept. has enough staff to fulfill the mission				
Communication within my program/ dept. is effective				
I have the tools I need to do my work				

\*Please provide comments for statements with a response of “sometimes” or “never”:

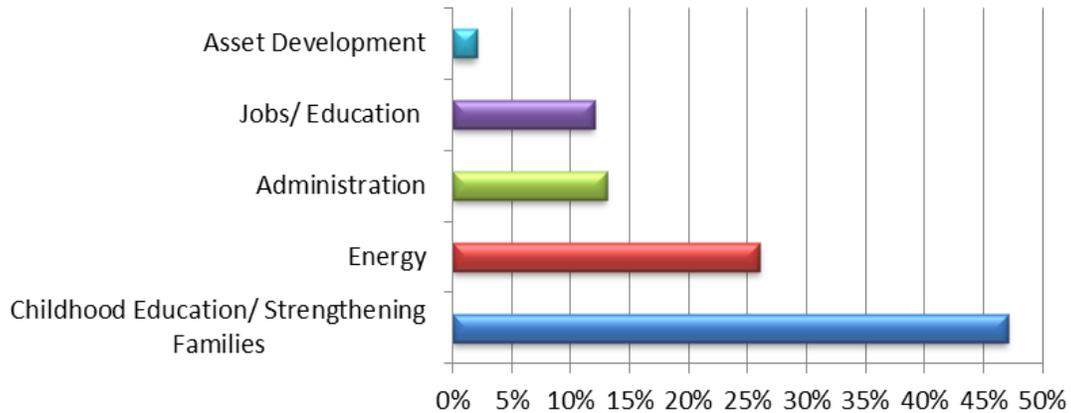
12. What education, training, and skill building opportunities would be helpful to you in improving your current position?

13. What else would help you serve clients better?

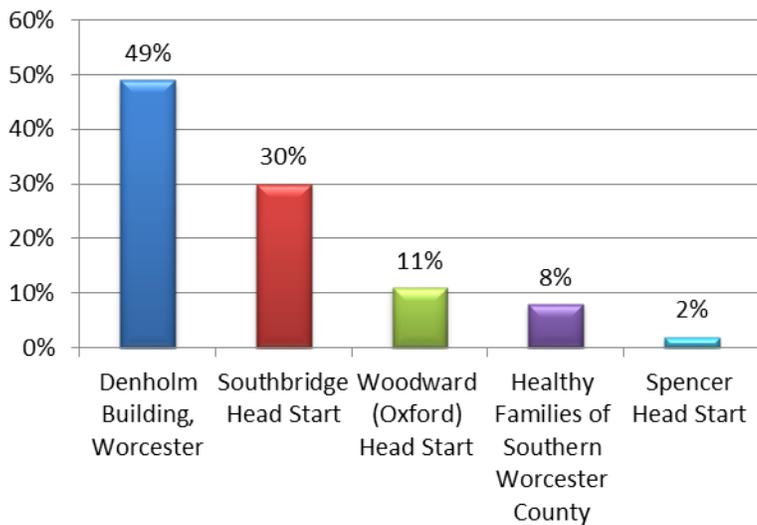
**Thank you for your valuable feedback!**

## Staff Survey Results

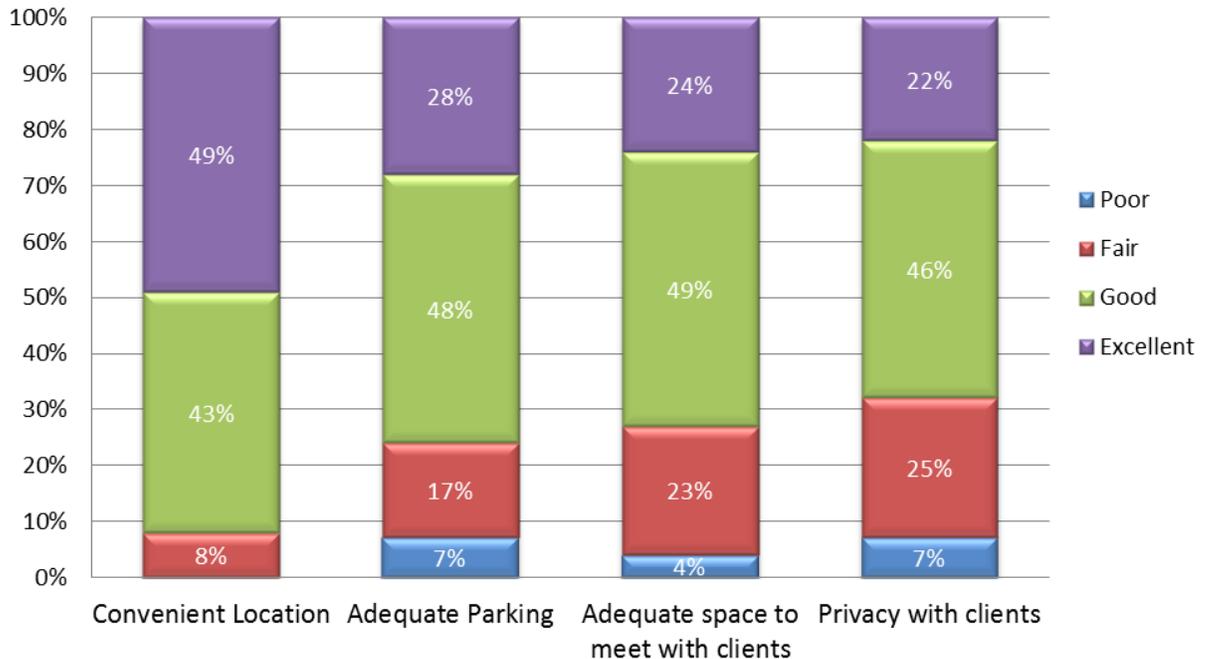
**Q1:** I work in the following department/program area:



**Q2:** I work mostly in the following facility:

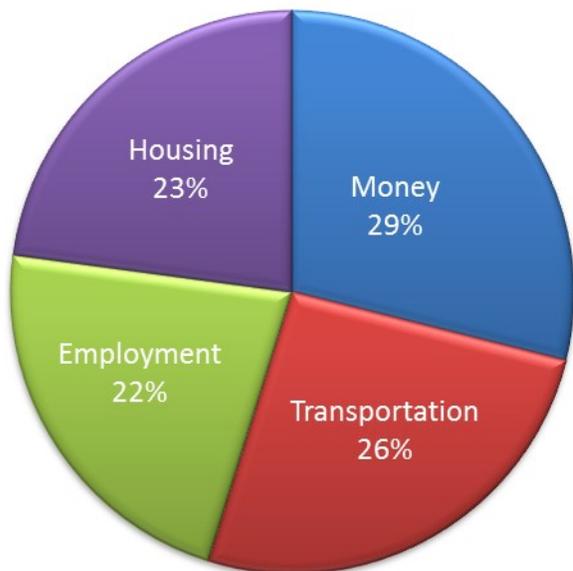


**Q3:** Please rate the facility you indicated above.



## Staff Survey Results

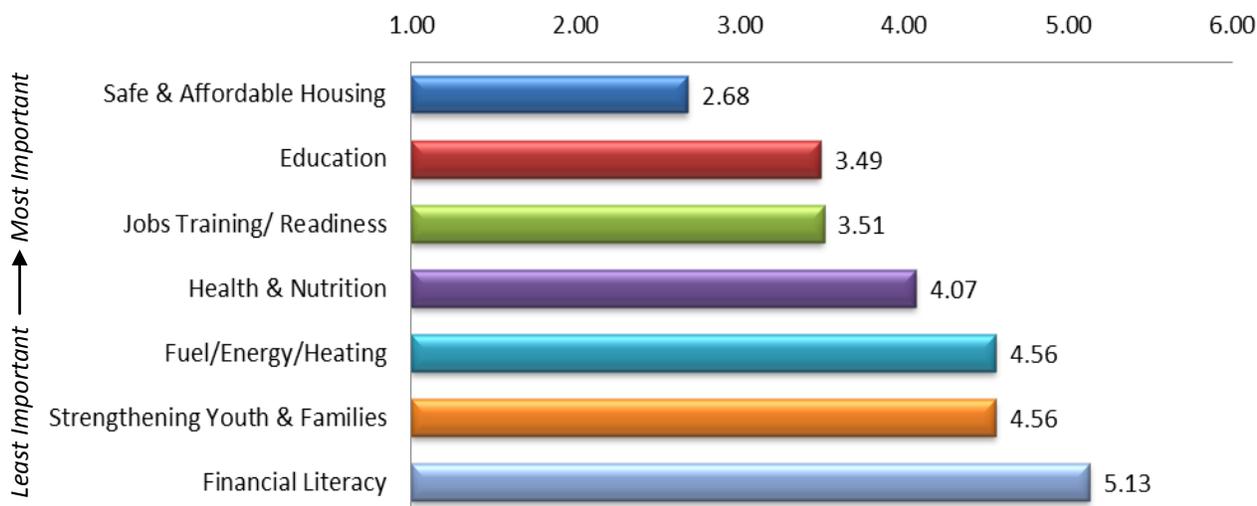
**Q4:** Please list the top four issues that you believe affect our customers on a daily basis:



*Other responses included:*

- Access/Knowledge of Programs
- Lack of education
- Lack of budgeting experience
- Need for childcare
- Communication/language barriers
- Cost of utilities
- Time/ tardiness
- Facilities
- Family/relationship Issues
- Food
- Health Care
- Lack of technology
- Lack of youth programming
- Motivation/personal Issues
- Paperwork
- Restrictive Policies/Regulations
- Safety
- Agency staffing issues
- Lack of diapers
- Too young for services

**Q5:** The following is a list of service typically provided to our target population. Please rank them in their importance to helping people improve the quality of their lives. (1 = Most Important; 7 = Least Important)



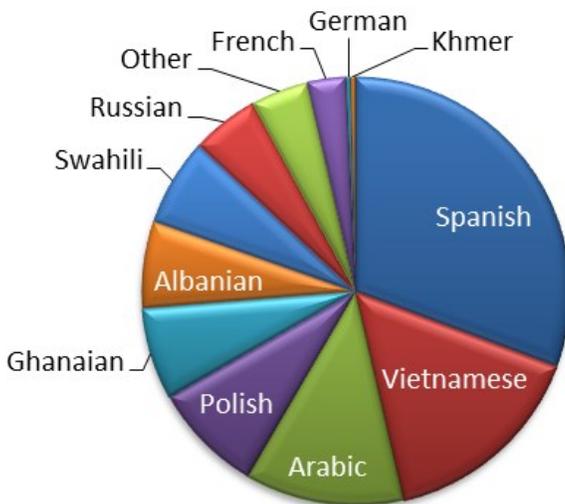
## Staff Survey Results

**Q6:** Please select the rating for each statement below that best represents your experience. (1= always; 6= never)



*Note: Scale is from 1-3. No staff member responded with a ranking below 2.5 for any statement.*

**Q7:** Besides English, what languages do you hear our customers speaking?



*Other Responses Included:*

Twi, Portuguese, Burmese, Nepalese, Bosnian

## Staff Survey Results

**Q8:** What other areas in which our clients have needs do you believe WCAC should be addressing, if any?

*Responses Included:*

- Increased case management or case coordination services across all programs
- More outreach for the fuel assistance, expanding the Hi-Set/ ESL program. One stop family center.
- Transportation for parent meetings, help getting driver's license or more public transportation. Public transportation in South County is nearly non-existent and it is a huge challenge for our program.
- Parent support groups for young parents
- Addressing nutrition issues more aggressively, collaborating with Farmer's Markets, or Cooking Matters and Project Bread programs
- Budget counseling and financial literacy.
- Being able to increase our supports to families in South Worcester would be fantastic
- Being able to be a part of a community or youth center in town to increase community engagement and access to all the great programs we offer
- Offer an on-site professional counselor who can be available on a daily basis for clients who are visiting or using our services. The counselor could help clients assess mental health needs and then refer them to outside agencies from there.
- Helping clients stay out of "emergency situations" and planning ahead.
- Elderly clients have expressed the need for someone to help them with cleaning and other daily chores. Also, many clients are overwhelmed with the amount of 'stuff' they have in their homes and have no way to get rid of it.

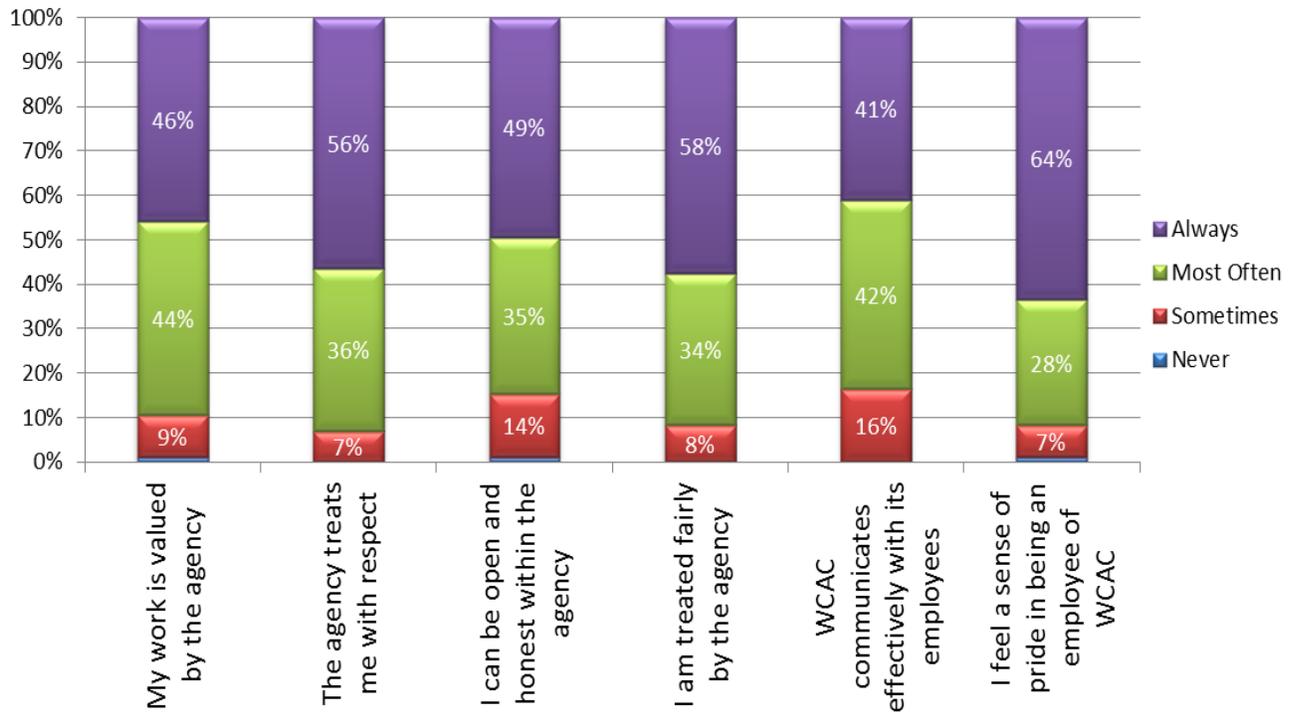
**Q9:** What, or how, could WCAC be doing things differently to meet the needs of the target population?

*Responses Included:*

- More aggressive outreach, through advertising on TV, participating in local events, and distributing flyers. Update the website, and have on-line applications for WCAC programs.
- Become more knowledgeable of the client's core problems from the client's point of view. Find the recurring themes and put a plan in action to eliminate them.
- Have seminars for the clients so that they understand the process better and know how the system works.
- Better system of communication between families and the program. Asking parents directly what they need and how we accommodate them.
- Having the programs that are housed at WCAC in Worcester be offered in South County as well.
- Strengthen partnerships and improve strategic alliances and services with local organizations.
- Whole team approach vs. staff working against each other in certain departments.
- Make sure all personnel are aware of the different programs we offer.
- Offer free transportation so clients can avoid paying high taxi rates.

## Staff Survey Results

**Q10:** Please respond to each statement below about the WCAC work environment.



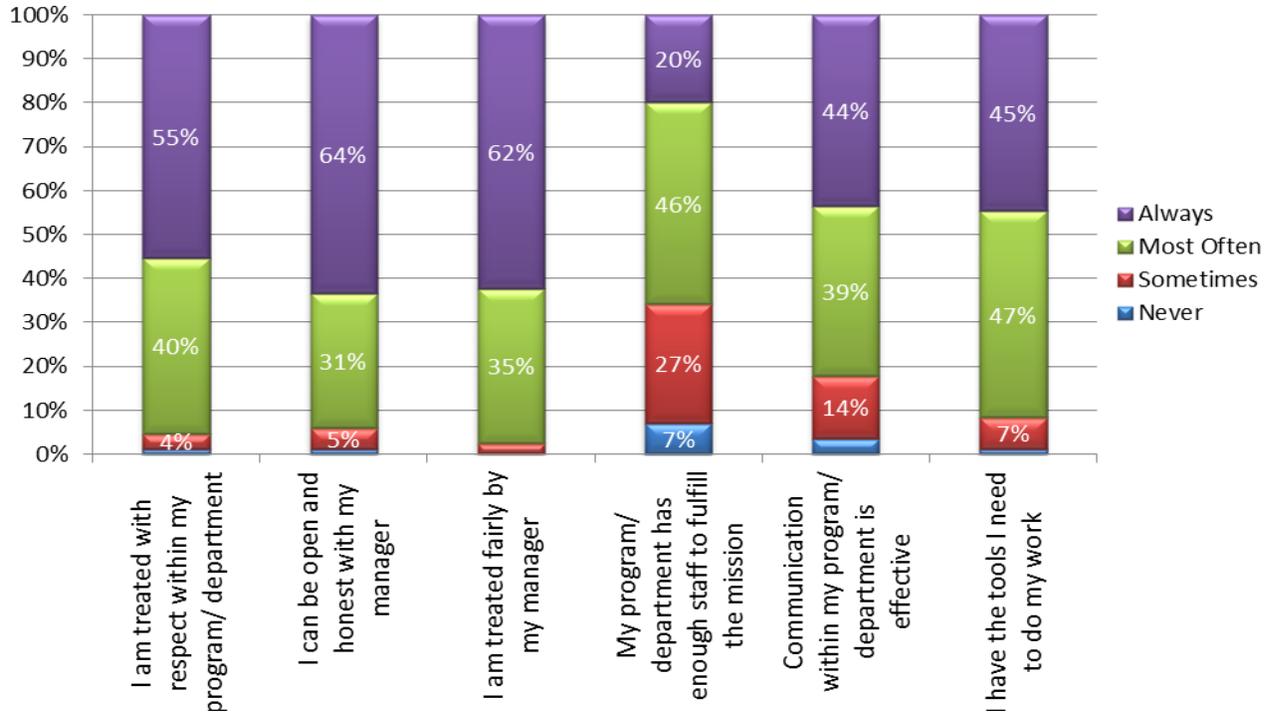
Please provide comments for statements with a response of 'sometimes' or 'never.'

### Responses Included:

- It sometimes feels as if the agency is not open to feedback or does not value staff input.
- Communication between departments is not strong.
- Some things take too long to trickle down to all employees.
- WCAC doesn't always communicate program or funding changes.
- You don't often get positive feedback on all the good work you are doing. Time is always made to let you know if you've made a mistake.

## Staff Survey Results

**Q11:** Please respond to each statement below about your program/department work environment.



Please provide comments for statements with a response of 'sometimes' or 'never.'

### Responses Included:

- Head Start is often short-staffed and it is challenging to maintain ratios in the classroom.
- There is no set way of communicating within our program, sometimes not all staff is informed about changes at the same time.
- Youth benefit tremendously with individual attention from staff, but staff is often stretched thin to reach everyone.
- New regulations have slowed down the weatherization process and require more auditors in the field.
- Very hard to retain education staff, the pay is just too low for the required credentials.
- Due to uncertainty of funding from one year to the next and the nature of the distribution of funding, staffing can be an issue.
- We have funding to use, but with more codes and requirements each audit and the paperwork involved takes longer.

## Staff Survey Results

**Q12:** What education, training and skill building opportunities would be helpful to you in improving your current position?

*Responses Included:*

- Tuition assistance/reimbursement for college courses
- Customer service training
- Staff team building
- Cross-training within the department to help in case of unforeseen absences
- Workshops with other agencies and service providers (i.e. unemployment, welfare, social security) to have up to date information to provide to clients
- Training with National Grid to help clients understand their energy bills
- Behavior management training
- Computer/software training
- Mental health training, including learning how to make referrals
- Trainings on new curriculum

**Q13:** What else would help you serve clients better?

*Responses Included:*

- More unrestricted funding
- Improve strategic alliances and services with local organizations, strengthening partnerships already in place
- Provide Spanish GED instruction
- Become more knowledgeable of the clients core problems from the client's point of view
- More aggressive outreach/advertising to clients
- Better communication with clients to help them understand the system
- Make sure staff are well informed about all programs provided by WCAC
- Offering the programs provided in Worcester in South County as well
- More active social media, updated website, online applications for programs
- Increase access to transportation

**Community Focus Group  
March 6, 2014, Worcester Public Library**

**Attendees**

Anthony Gardner (Regional Environmental Council); Dix Davis (Comm. Member); Ron Hadorn (Boys and Girls Club of Worcester); Sean McGauley (Central MA Workforce Investment Board); Debbie Loewe (Imperial Distributors); Frank Kartheiser (Worcester Interfaith); Derek Brindisi (Worcester Dept. of Public Health); Laura Overton (Worcester Dept. of Public Health); Gary MacConnell (Comm. Member); Reverend Carla Dietz (Greendale People's Church)

**WCAC Staff**

Jill Dagilis (Executive Director); Donna McGrath (Director of Planning and Development)  
Nancy Jackson (Strategic Plan Consultant/ Facilitator); Georgia Lawrence (Intern)

**Needs Matrix**

*The Facilitator provided a brief overview of the process. She then distributed colored sticky dots to post on a wall matrix of categories (see chart below). She instructed the group to place the dots on the wall indicating 'Major Need,' 'Moderate Need,' 'Minor Need,' or 'Don't Know.' The results are listed below:*

	Major Need	Moderate Need	Minor Need	Don't Know
<b>Career Needs</b>				
Education and training opportunities for careers	5	3	0	
More job opportunities	9	0	0	1
Better paying jobs	6	1	2	
Jobs for the elderly (55+)	1	1	3	1
<b>Housing Needs</b>				
Elderly care/ housing/assistance in home	3	1	2	1
Safe and affordable housing	4	2	1	
<b>Health and Mental Health Care</b>				
Substance Abuse Prevention/Treatment	4	4	2	
Access to health care	5	1	1	
Free or affordable health insurance	5	0	4	1
Mental health resources	4	1	2	2
Better nutrition and exercise	5	0	1	2
Improved public transportation	3	2	1	
Services for disabled	2	5	0	
<b>Asset Management and Financial Assistance</b>				
Financial literacy/Money management	2	2	1	
Help with high cost of food	3	4	0	1
Help with utility/heating bills	2	0	0	
Affordable daycare	1	4	1	1
<b>Social Services</b>				
Family violence and abuse prevention	0	4	0	
<b>Public Service and Safety</b>				
Reduced Crime	5	3	0	1
Assistance with legal issues	1	3	2	
<b>Diverse Populations</b>				
Support for immigrants	6	3	0	
Diversity appreciation	4	2	0	2
<b>Education</b>				
Better public education	1	2	0	

## Highlights

- Jobs was a key category, along with education and training opportunities for careers
- Access to healthcare and better nutrition/exercise/mental health resources
- Elderly care/housing/assistance in home
- Reduced crime
- Support for immigrants

## Discussion

- Mental Health: People are sent to the ER more and more because hospitals have cut back on the special facilities to help them outside of ER; there are only services for people who are acting out/displaying distress, not people with moderate, ongoing needs; very little support for siblings of children with mental health needs
- Support for Immigrants: learning English is a huge problem, many immigrants are not literate in their home/first language; long waitlists are a big barrier to access
- Minimum Wage: available jobs aren't paying enough, people look for increased number of part time jobs and then spend more time away from their families; especially supported by Worcester Interfaith
- Transportation: Lack of adequate busing is a huge barrier to people getting/maintaining jobs; major problem especially for youth and the elderly
- Access to Healthy Food: many people don't know about farmer's markets offering SNAP benefits, need more education and also transportation is a barrier
- Youth Development Programs: programs need to expand, youth need better opportunities during the summer, should be a training wage to help youth get work experience; new business development should include plans to help bring people back into the workforce, especially young men of color

*Facilitator: Any surprises from the results of the matrix?*

- Family violence and substance abuse prevention not ranked high, conflicts with respondent's experience with clients, this may suggest people still experience barriers to talking about it
- 'Better Public Education' ranked relatively low but issues still exist- respondents talked about needing smaller class sizes, differentiating education support for girls and boys, problems specifically with helping minority students and the high suspension rates for minorities in Worcester schools, higher priority for the city versus the county overall

## Wish List

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*The Facilitator gave 2 blank cards to each participant and asked: If you could wave a magic wand and address any issue, what would you put as your top two?*

- 24 hour affordable transportation
- Effective community schools
- Expanded transportation services
- More resources
- Finding employment after college
- Affordable housing
- Bigger food justice push

- Availability of low-cost healthy food in every neighborhood
- Affordable healthy food
- Six people of color on the city Council
- College preparedness and help line
- Free apprentice and job training or job training for youth
- Support an expansion of programs for youth e.g. Boys and Girls Club
- More funding for youth job programs
- Places and opportunities to learn a skilled job

### **Highlights/ Themes**

- transportation
- youth jobs
- job pipeline- recruitment, training, skills, mentoring

### **Discussion**

- Challenge with the lack of jobs, even for people with college degrees, It is hard to keep young graduates in Worcester because of the lack of jobs, people aren't leaving their positions, discouraging for them to have to work at low-paying jobs, especially with major debt from loans, and then that also takes away minimum wage jobs from lower skilled workers and youth
- Not everyone wants to go to college and there's a need for apprenticeship programs/ trade schools
- Need for more follow up with youth and job training programs, really important to get employers to invest and offer permanent positions, need to make sure people stay employed

*Facilitator: For those of you that know WCAC, where do you see them doing good work and where do they need to expand to address these issues? Any words of wisdom/takeaways from today?*

- Bigger need for people setting policy to understand poverty, many of them have perceptions of what it is like to be poor, but don't understand what it really feels like; poor people have to work so hard to prove that they're poor
- WCAC does a good job of using their knowledge and insight to shape and set their agenda
- Regulations can be a chokehold for doing good, programs have to prove their outcomes and it is a reporting nightmare; scrutiny is drastically increasing
- WCAC does a good job with workforce development, really making it clear to clients that if they work hard in the program, it can lead to a good job
- Communicating with clients is really important, getting them important information about services, ex. Not enough people understand how to manage their food stamps throughout the month , people often feel embarrassed going through the process or using the system

**Community Focus Group**  
**March 7, 2014, James Edwards Library, Southbridge**

**Attendees**

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Margaret Morrissey (James Edwards Library); Carl Coniglio (Site Director, Ware Adult Learning Center, the Literacy Project); Jane June (Quinsigamond Community College, Dean of Healthcare)

**WCAC Staff**

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Jill Dagilis (Executive Director); Donna McGrath (Director of Planning and Development); Charlotte Operach (Healthy Families Program Director); Nancy Jackson (Strategic Plan Consultant/ Facilitator); Georgia Lawrence (Intern)

**The Face of Poverty**

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*Facilitator: What are the indicators of poverty? What does poverty look like here?*

- Multigenerational issues
- College students without transportation to get to class
- College students have children
- Graduates going into entry-level work e.g. see that graduates need small steps to grow in their careers
- 97% taking high school credential and counseling are low income
- Isolation and struggles with transportation
- Health and mental health issues
- Parenting issues regarding childcare and good parenting
- Childcare vouchers are hard to get and child care is beyond people's mean, even when they have them getting to daycare is an issue with limited transportation
- Geographic mobility, people move in and out of towns, the county/region, consistent follow-through is interrupted
- Homelessness and couch surfing is increasing
- Criminal records, felonies
- Literacy issues, people are sometimes not literate in their first/home language
- Multiple languages
- 73% qualify for school lunch subsidy
- Debt and credit issues; behind in rent; facing eviction

*Facilitator: Where are we seeing service gaps year to year?*

- Homelessness/ eviction prevention, emergency housing; permanent housing
- Government funding for reentry programs
- Affordable healthcare services; Inpatient services
- Mental health services waitlist; going to emergency rooms for mental health care
- Need to be hospitalized to get meds
- Dearth of mental health services; only George B Wells, South Bay, Valley Human Services
- Drugs (heroin) and alcohol abuse increasing, coming to the library under influence, in and out of recovery
- Emergency room visits versus primary care provider access
- Domestic abuse services lacking, especially housing options; non-empathetic crisis intake for domestic violence by police

- Fragmented services for high school credentials
- Literacy and education- Reduced funding for Adult Education (ABE, GED, ESOL)
- Not educated about services and opportunities or the system, especially people moving into the state who don't have knowledge about the way the system works here, need web-based referral network that works better
- 65+ age group increasing, they are isolated/unaware of programs and services
- Affordable fresh vegetables and nutrition education
- Financial literacy training, people can't save enough to buy a car, or put a utility bill in their name

## **Conversations for Change**

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*Facilitator: What are the conversations we are always having/hearing even though our data on poverty doesn't change?*

- Blaming the poor: "poor people don't help themselves," "they just want to get money from the government," language of dependency
- "Those programs don't work," onus is put on the people in poverty, not the solutions
- Childhood poverty is increasing, question public school's role in preventing/solving this
- Has the federal poverty level really kept pace with the true cost of living?
- Increase in education will lead to a decrease in the prison population
- People have no heat; elderly in the cold
- Job training has been talked about for decades, need to create a pipeline from Hi-Set to job placement
- Middle-class pushed into poverty, especially with local mill closings, anyone can become homeless, HiSet no longer sufficient

*Facilitator: The conversations above are a broken record. What are the questions that we should be asking ourselves to help people move into economic self-sufficiency?*

- What is a sustained long-term solution?
- How do we get people in poverty educated?
- What is the best access?
- What policies need to be changed or developed to make the shift in poverty?
- How do we engage the community to accept responsibility for helping?
- How do we ensure community ownership over programs?
- What are the reasons people can't get to jobs?
- What is a living wage?
- How do we provide a living wage what is the gap between working poor and a living wage?
- What does a career ladder look like that works?
- How do we engage businesses/private industry as partners?
- What are the best models for asset building?

## **Discussion**

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- QCC discussed Intercare Alliance (longitudinal study): took their own low-level employees, provided education, paid tuition, provided opportunities, and continue to do well.
- Regional Employment Board could have more successes/collaborative partnerships. People can't get to career training centers.
- Need better communication/centralized information to be aware of what's going on.

**United Service Executives Focus Group  
March 19, 2014, WCAC Board Room**

**Attendees**

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Ann Flynn (Guild of St. Agnes); Sheila Dooley (Pernet Family Health Service); Beth Folcarelli (You, Inc.); Angela Bovill (Lutheran Social Services New England)

**WCAC Staff**

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Jill Dagilis (Executive Director); Donna McGrath (Director of Planning and Development); Nancy Jackson (Strategic Plan Consultant/ Facilitator); Georgia Lawrence (Intern)

**Trends Wave**

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*The Facilitator asked each participant to write 2-3 cards-one idea per card- to answer the following question for each category: "What are the trends, needs, practices, and attitudes that define our work with people living in poverty?"*

**Category descriptions:**

Emerging: ideas that are still out at sea

Swell: ideas that are getting more attention, gaining momentum, getting results and you are constantly learning/growing from that experience, its pulling a lot of energy (not always positive)

Cresting: still producing results, but may be some hollowness underneath, the approach may be stale

Undertow: ideas that have lived out their lives and should be let go

**Group Responses** (pictured below):

Emerging: immigration, new immigrant populations, increased number of people in poverty, increased regulations, STEM at all education levels, democratic/republican differences on policy, programs and funding, unemployment- especially transitional youth/young adult, youth volunteerism, immigration reform, changing regulations and policies corporate social responsibility, need for wrap-around case management, pay equity for men and women, social media, changing regulations/policies, increased need for family support

Swell: disconnection in community (haves vs. have nots), lack of job skills/youth, lack of youth education, lack of entry level youth jobs, minimum wage increase, jobs, private programs, blame, public exhaustion (too many issues, sense of futility), multiple organizations with smaller programs, funding scarcity, increase in multicultural awareness, college access programs, language/cultural barriers, large vs. small agency capacity, pressure for more jobs/job development, disenfranchised Latino population, new behavioral health service system for children and families

Cresting: repeated fuel assistance, lack of financial literacy, stringent federal funding requirements, meeting basic needs vs. creating systemic change, uncertainty of available resources, misinformed public (causes and solutions to poverty), government debt (funding issues), youth employment, education reform, political roadblocks, immigration, teen pregnancy-effective programs just a start, employment opportunities for adults with disabilities

Undertow: choking regulations, disconnected systems and too many applications, disconnected services and providers



*Facilitator: As you look at the wall, what really jumps out at you?*

- Immigration, lots of people put that under emerging, but it was also put twice, it's cresting too since it's always been around
- Job/wage related issue
- Really not much on the undertow

*Facilitator: Where are we optimistic?*

- This group is looking at root causes in their work; there is power in all sitting in a room together, it could be harnessed to better align services and use that to push for advocacy
  - New generation of leaders in USE- new voice, muscle, some organizations still stay away, but there is the "swirl" of people who are committed to meeting like this
- Lot of push on the corporate side to engage in CSR
- Should capitalize on the growth of youth volunteerism
- Social media is a much cheaper way to communicate than previous forms of communication
- Huge opportunity to connect trends of increasing immigrant populations and lack of jobs- using microloans to finance new enterprise and create jobs, need to think about how to do it so it comes out right
  - Language barriers are still a huge hole

## Discussion

- When people get jobs they are more likely to stop being able to attend their ESOL classes
  - At LSSNE, this led to a retooling of how they get language skills into the community, working with employers to provide on-site ESL- how do we work with corporations

- We don't really have a unified approach with the companies as organizations, everyone is knocking on doors, those pieces are still fragmented and all over the place
- Duplicity of services has to go. How can the skills that we have be shared by the community, not only accessed by that program's clients?
- Organizations operating in a competitive funding environment
  - Creates a need to protect business model and skills unique to their programs, want to sustain viability of your own organization
  - There needs to be less non-profits, many of which are doing similar work
- Youth that are in services (and refugees) are willing to volunteer, people would start to see them differently in the community as an asset rather than a liability; change the perception that they are a drain on the system
  - There are a number of youth who come back to Worcester and serve as volunteers, come back and give, reach out to their youth with internship opportunities, for You, Inc. the impact they make during a person's adolescence really sticks with them
  - How do we create more of these opportunities?
- Perceptions among the 'have' and 'have nots' - frustrated with the idea that 'we don't want poor people in our downtown,' people have had a negative view of the people we serve
- Fighting for years for a seat at the table where our work is respected
- It's all about building relationships, especially with corporations, changing the perceptions
- Social services sector doesn't know how to talk to the corporate world in a language they understand
  - If we can engage their employees, their productivity is going to rise
  - Employees want to do something that matters
  - No longer interested in handouts, non-profits have a workforce, and a way to increase company's brands and CSR, show them that we are adding value to community
- No more 'soft, social service agency of yesteryear' – need to prove we are part of the economic development agenda
- Getting attention from political/corporate
  - Peddling solutions, political side its playing into ego for solutions, playing into corporate side its playing into their profitability, creating opportunity
  - Learned helplessness in the non-profit side, we are not helpless and we are very powerful and should have a place on the agenda
  - Change in leadership at the policy/national/state level is necessary
- Need to leave the 'old-school' non-profit image behind
- Discussions with philanthropic organizations leads to question of whether funders can force non-profits work together through grant-making, rather than parsing out the funding to a lot of smaller organizations
  - funders don't necessarily want to be the instigating part of that agenda, even though they would want to see that
  - Many times the only way this happens is through funders 'right-sizing' the industry- either we do this ourselves or we get forced to do this down the line and maybe not in the right way
  - It's a challenge to break those long term relationships, some of those are bigger than this group

*Facilitator: What's your feedback to WCAC? If you were on the WCAC Board what would you be thinking about/pushing?*

- WCAC is one of the better positioned to start pulling these things together for Worcester as a whole
- At You, Inc.- no longer funding through philanthropic dollars only for their organization, pull the funding by establishing relationships and leveraging dollars with strategic partnerships
- WCAC could be a central force in creating those connections, collaborations
- Really big grants need innovation and partnerships, look at the \$1 million dollar, not a lot of \$100,000 or \$500,000 grants
  - Small grants are so much work for a little bit of funding, rather focus on building relationships and capacity with partners
- Sell Worcester as a pilot site that can test ideas and then communicate them nationally

*Facilitator: What shifts would you recommend?*

- Looking at our clients as assets, rather than clients or burdens on community, they are keys to the kingdom, stop the blame
  - Issue of framing this for elderly clients or the disabled that require more caretaking
- Learning how to shift our language and purpose to align with political agenda and corporate interests
- Changing the policy comes from proving the outcomes
- What would it really take to change the face of poverty and our understanding of what keeps people in poverty, culture of dependence is embedded in our policies - dangling carrots for people doesn't work
- Look who's not at the table- the people we're talking about, we need that channel, where are the immigrants? Youth?
  - Maybe the board is not the best place for that
  - Find other ways to strengthen that voice for the organization
  - Make it an empowering experience, making it a meaningful experience
- Incorporate a PR piece into strategy to counteract the misinformed perceptions of poverty and potential solutions

**Attendees**

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Rep Kevin Kuros; Rep Daniel Donahue; Rep Anne Gobi; Doreen Goodrich for Senator Michael Moore; Gladys Rodriguez for Congressman Jim McGovern; David Muradian for Rep George Peterson; Justine Coggiano for Rep Kim Ferguson; Rep Jim O'Day; and Senator Harriett Chandler

**WCAC Staff**

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Jill Dagilis (Executive Director); Donna McGrath (Director of Planning and Development); Georgia Lawrence (Intern); Terra Olivera (Administrative Assistant); Kathleen Dow (Co-Director of Children's Services); Sarah Dudek (Head Start Supervisor); Mary Knittle (Director of Energy Resources); Ros Baker (LIHEAP Coordinator); Charlotte Operach (Healthy Families Program Director); Fran George (Senior Accountant); Suresh Shah (Director of Finance); Charla Hixson (Director of Jobs and Education Center & Asset Development Programs); Christian Doughty (Holy Cross student)

**WCAC Board Members**

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Bill Van Dam (Board Chair); Dale Allen; Joanne Gravell; and Bob Jennings

*Following a review of WCAC's programs and discussion about FY2015 state line items and funding, Executive Director Jill Dagilis asked the legislators the following questions.*

**What do you think are the 3 primary causes of poverty?**

- Lack of jobs.
- High cost of living and lack of affordable housing.
- Hoping that we're moving the issue of increasing the minimum wage forward, data shows that if you put money back into the hands of folks living on the edge, they put that money back into the community economy and it can create jobs.
- There are a number of unfilled jobs in Central MA because people don't have the right education.
- Need to reach the 0-3 year-old children; if we don't get to children early, they have so little opportunity in their lives, there has to be that connection when they're young.

**Are WCAC's four focus areas (employment, education, energy, and asset development) still relevant?**

- The four areas are still true – especially energy. If you can't keep our house warm – a core need – then you won't/can't look for a job. It is so crucial for people being able to live their lives.
- Job development – connecting with potential employers to develop a strategy for a workforce development grant program may be an effort well spent.
- Financial education is needed – people need to manage money and bill paying in order to get out of poverty.
- The four categories are strong and on point.
- WCAC knows how to bring people up. People need tools. No need to do more of everything.
- WCAC recognizes its own core competencies. Your contacts and access to other organizations is wonderful. Your understanding that children are the future is crucial.
- We have seen what happens when cultural groups come together and legislate together. You can start streamlining and cooperating more with others.

- We've had the conversation about minimum wage and we need to be able to tell the story to people about those that live in that 'other world.' We continue to lead in Massachusetts in so many areas and we should be proud of that.
- All executive directors of local agencies need to get together to discuss collaborations and not duplicate services. Show us how over the past fifty years how exactly you're making a difference.

**Attendees (by department)**

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*Energy:* Mark Lapan, Mary Knittle, Jannelle Correa, Linda Booker, Mayra Nieves, Linda Barrett, Nina Bosnjak

*Healthy Families:* Charlotte Operach, Sarah Dudek

*Head Start:* Kathleen Down, Caryl Rice, Francisca Gonzales, Beverly Gordon, Christina Howard, Venelba Canales, Laura Morrow

*Jobs & Education:* Todd Smith, Alan Tubman

*Finance:* Suresh Shah, Fran George

*Administrative:* Kerry Brennan, Donna McGrath, Jill Dagilis, Terra Oliveira, Georgia Lawrence

*Strategic Plan Consultant/ Facilitator:* Nancy Jackson

**Review of Staff Survey Results**

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*Facilitator: What is surprising?*

- Violence not listed higher in the top issues affecting customers
- Very surprising that mental health and substance abuse aren't coming up as much because they are seeing it with their clients everyday

*Facilitator: What makes you feel good about these results?*

- Transportation- being number one is exciting because we (HS) are seeing it every day and it's good to know others are focused on that issue as well
- Most people feel we're meeting the needs of the clients

**Visioning for the Future**

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*The Facilitator asked each participant the question, "What do we hope to see in place at WCAC in three years?"*

*Consider what is new and different? Who is coming through the door? Who are your colleagues? What is that new approach that has changed how you serve clientele? Who out in the community are you interacting with through a partnership? Participants had several minutes to free-write.*

*Participants were then split into groups of 3-4 and asked to share their lists with each other and write five answers on separate cards, limiting answers to no more than seven words. Each team submitted their cards which were then grouped into columns by similar ideas.*

The columns were then named to answer the question: What do we hope to see in place at WCAC in three years? The Facilitator later clustered the columns into strategic directions.

It's about ... Staff Satisfaction		It's about .... Updated Infrastructure		
<b>Stronger Enhanced Team</b>	<b>Meaningful &amp; Competitive Compensation Strategy</b>	<b>Inviting and Highly Functional Facilities</b>	<b>Functional Integrated Technology</b>	<b>Accessible and Flexible Transportation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training &amp; staff development</li> <li>▪ Staff training program</li> <li>▪ Individualized staff training</li> <li>▪ Known for exceptional internal teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased salaries and benefits</li> <li>▪ Better employee benefits</li> <li>▪ Higher pay for home visitors and teachers</li> <li>▪ Increased salary levels</li> <li>▪ Flexible scheduling</li> <li>▪ Competitive compensation- wages, retirement, life insurance, health insurance</li> <li>▪ System for flex-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilities with parking and structurally sound, enough space</li> <li>▪ Improved facilities and accessibility</li> <li>▪ New building for Healthy Families and Head Start to share</li> <li>▪ Facilities upgrade – new roof at Woodward location, new playground at Southern Worcester County location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interactive online presence, social media</li> <li>▪ Updated technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased transportation for clients and families</li> <li>▪ Company vans for program use</li> </ul>
It's about .... Adaptive, Flexible Client Service				
<b>Flexible Growth</b>	<b>Empowered Self-Sufficient Clientele</b>	<b>Supportive Case Management</b>	<b>Enhanced Marketing &amp; Communications</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Flexible funding that is sustainable to support agency</li> <li>▪ Increased private sector support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Less community dependency on our services</li> <li>▪ Less energy emergencies from elders</li> <li>▪ Extending target age to include youth 14-15 and infants/toddlers for specific programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quinsigamond Community College – WCAC collaboration, training, Hi Set Center</li> <li>▪ Student workbooks for each students to use independently</li> <li>▪ Stronger relations with private companies for living wage jobs for youth</li> <li>▪ Increased partners training that leads to jobs</li> <li>▪ More help for students with learning disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness of our colleague's programs</li> <li>▪ Integrated approach to accessing range of programs</li> <li>▪ Personalize contract- more completed applications and more referrals</li> <li>▪ Case management- language resources, financial training, mental health services</li> <li>▪ Better coordination of services</li> <li>▪ Increased awareness of our programs in the community</li> <li>▪ Fiscal/financial literacy, money management</li> </ul>	

## Discussion

Facilitator: What gets you most excited?

- Facilities!
- Meaningful competitive compensation strategy
- Stronger enhanced team

Facilitator: What's hard to pull off?

- Self-sufficient clientele
- Transportation
- Marketing/com
- Salaries- linked to funding, not desire to change, benefits are tied to costs

Facilitator: What is most catalytic? What will drive the most growth?

- The team, the people here
- Partnerships, other case management resources
- Marketing will bring in the funding
  - Lot of companies that were supportive of us 20-30 years ago are no longer in existence

Facilitator: What are the immediate priorities for the organization?

- Focus on the funding
- Capacity building of the whole agency
- Facilities is a big driver
- Capacity building – positioning the agency for the long-haul



Image: Staff Responses Visioning Exercise

## Youth Employer Advisory Board Focus Group May 23, 2014, WCAC Jobs and Education Center

### Attendees

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Jose Ruben Lopez (Worcester Housing Authority); Eunice Morales (Youth Community Member); McKenzie Gratton (Youth Community Member); Celina Rosa (Imperial Distributors); George P. (Probate Court); Steve Abraham (Probate Court); Maria Canales (Family Health); Sean McGauley (Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board); Chico Thomas (Integral Resources); George Spring (Multi-Cultural Wellness Center); Yolanda Villumil (Alpha Travel); Linedy Ortiz (Youth Community Member); Daniel Yeboah (Youth Community Member); Tony Smith (Multi-Cultural Wellness Center); Shelby Hutchinson (Family Health, Former Youth Community Member)

### WCAC Staff

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Jill Dagilis (Executive Director); Charla Hixson (Director of Jobs and Education Center & Asset Development Programs); Linda Taylor (Job Developer); Bob Morrison (Job Developer)

### Discussion

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*WCAC Staff asked the Advisory Board: What are the challenges as an employer of at-risk youth? What factors make it difficult to help youth stay employed?*

- Need education tailored to specific job duties
- Dress code
- Punctuality biggest problem
- Need to appreciate youth and help them realize this is an opportunity
- Treat youth as any other staff person would be treated-helps gain their respect-youth do not always trust adults
- Raise the bar-expect a high level of performance
- Need to give confidence to increase self-esteem
- Coaching needed
- Treated as part of the company
- Training (at Integral Resources) can be intimidating (it is 3 days with a written test)
- Helping them take rejection and keep trying
- Keeping them interested and motivated
- WCAC does well with the basics, but there is a lot an employer can do-create a buddy/mentoring program, responsibility of employer to supervise youth
- Transportation
- Additional training before assignment to a worksite is made
- Must be proactive-communicate with youth by meeting them where they are-for example, if didn't have breakfast, get them breakfast first before starting a discussion about why they are late, other issues
- Suggestion that WCAC should advertise what it does more to spread information about our good work

*Executive Director, Jill Dagilis, asked what everyone thought about having an incentive program-for example, youth would receive \$1,000 if had a high level of performance.*

Although the group acknowledged that incentives are necessary and important for any staff person, youth felt a cash award would feel like a bribe. Youth suggested a system for earning a raise, a certificate, a formal letter of recommendation, or a system for moving up the ladder would be best practice.

**Board of Directors Focus Group**  
**June 16, 2014, UNUM Paul Revere Room, Worcester, MA**

**Attendees**

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Steven Desmarais, Tachalla Gibeau, Joanne Gravell, Mark Gustafson, Yary Jaen, Kathy Johnson, Noreen Johnson Smith, Steven Joseph, Mike Keegan, Ryan Marshall, Peter Martin, Gladys Rodriguez Parker, William Van Dam, Donald Xenos

**WCAC Staff**

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Jill Dagilis (Executive Director); Donna McGrath (Director of Planning and Development); Kerry Brennan (Director of Human Resources); Terra Oliveira (Administrative Assistant); Nancy Jackson (Strategic Plan Consultant/ Facilitator); Georgia Lawrence (Intern)

**Strategic Planning Presentation** (See attached)

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*Facilitator gave overview of data gathering process to date.*

‘THEORY OF CHANGE’ (Slides 2-3)

- “If we do \_\_\_\_\_, then we know we will have an impact.”
- Two major responses from surveys/focus groups: increase accessibility and build trusting relationships with clientele.
- With this framework, we should be discussing with staff how this changes how they do their work.

Discussion:

- WCAC’s service area chart does not necessarily reflect whether or not the services are located in that town or if there are clients using that service are from that particular town but coming to Worcester for the program.
- If we were going to pull back from other towns surrounding Worcester, is there a plan in place to help residents find those services they were receiving elsewhere?
  - Short answer is ‘no’ but this is something we would really have to think about as we make changes.
- We need to work on an accurate representation of the communities our services reach and how big the programs are within each town.

CLIENT NEEDS (Slide 5)

*Facilitator: What jumps out at you with this chart?*

- Affordable food – more of an issue than healthcare and childcare.
- It is encouraging that getting a good education ranks so highly on people’s list of concerns.
- Do we track people’s level of financial literacy? People rank ‘help managing money’ highly, but do we know how they are currently doing?
  - Would it help to focus on this issue? For example if people had a better grasp on this aspect of their lives, would they have more money for food?

ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS (Slide 6)

- 90% of WCAC staff across a variety of different questions feel satisfied in their position, yet they are looking for a stronger, enhanced team and meaningful and competitive compensation strategy- the Facilitator noted that compensation is very common answer among organizations.

- Updated infrastructures: enhancing technology to meet needs of a decentralized organization, repairs to buildings, improved transportation – such as parking.
- Needs at the program level: adaptable, flexible client service. Being able to meet the clients where they are; moving away from transactional service model. That means needing diversified funding for a model of supportive, wrap-around case management.

#### OUR ENVIRONMENT IN 2014 (Handout, see attached)

*Facilitator: are there other opportunities that you see out there? How about threats?*

- Opportunity- Finding other funding sources.
- Threat- demand for services going higher and higher while funding continues to go down.
- Threat- very negative attitude toward low-income people have been emerging recently.
- Opportunity- we're at a good point to reexamine how we're working together to improve the whole community.
- Opportunity- getting on the state agenda to get support as a non-profit business.
- Threat- messaging is different, people have an image of low-income, and don't consider the elderly.
  - Money is really only a piece of the pie; it is not necessarily the defining parameter of 'poverty'.
- Opportunity- upgrading facilities really makes a huge difference for how people feel receiving services.

#### STRATEGY 1: Cross Pollination (Slide 7)

Discussion:

- Do people really want to find out about more services when they walk in the door or do they just want that one service?
  - Experience at Main South CDC: Offering intake form- asking for any other reasons that they're there, it is important to consider accessibility of language; for example, clients were uninterested in 'financial literacy' but very interested in 'credit repair.'
- Some employees are uncomfortable with the changes, would rather not mix up how we do things, but the time is right for us to really look at this differently and make the hard decisions.

#### STRATEGY 2: Community Network (Slide 8)

Discussion:

- Are the synergies there around co-locating?
  - There could be, at many levels: from agencies establishing agreements with each other, to establishing an umbrella organization to run this type of collaboration, to considering mergers.
- Do we at least look at this as a concept and as a plan?
  - Opportunities should always be looked at, in this environment it makes sense to consider it.
  - You can do it in a confidential manner – it would not be a swift process.
  - If we could do something to reduce our administrative costs that would be a positive and get more money flowing to our clients.
  - If we're not considering something that could help the clients we serve, then we're doing them a disservice.
  - We all understand that if you don't keep changing you won't survive.

- It's hard to comment on this without knowing what it will look like; this is an exploratory process.
- Concerns about the organization being in a situation that people lose confidence in us which jeopardizes funding.
- We're going to have to be very good at defining and defending what we do through data in this process in case any aspect is brought into question.
- One key is that the driver is 'a better service model for clients' versus approaching it from the 'organizationally we need to align with another organization'.
- We know our drivers are better access, and relationships with our clients.

*Facilitator: As a board, what are you hoping in the next year to accomplish? (4-5 key accomplishments)*

- Check in with CAP Law about strategic alliances, check with funders about making shifts in structures and alliances that won't jeopardize funding, what structures need to be maintained.
- Get to a better situation with the leases of the Head Start buildings, more stability.
- As a board member I don't know enough about what other organizations are providing services to these organizations – where are the potential alliances? What is the constellation around services being offered?
- A wildly successful WCAC would be taking a leadership role in regionalization of human services.
- What is the appropriate scale for looking at various services that we provide? What is the appropriate size of a program?
- Prove why we would be the Central Massachusetts regional center for these.
- How do we tell the story of how we move people to self-sufficiency?
- Show the metrics- show people why it's us. For as good as our information is, it's not where it needs to be.
- Who else in the area that we serve fits with our organization?
  - Are there ways to create new programs out of our shared resources?
- Emerging conversation about Worcester Public Schools- are there alliances with those institutions to reach those families, also Quinsigamond Community College that has a lot of funding support at the state and national level and could provide access to clients.
- Look at our own metrics and find out about clients that we cross-serve. We've got to look at what we're doing ourselves first – do it at home so we can model it outside as well.
- Capitalize on the higher education resources in the region, would save us from spending the dollars ourselves, and they could really help with the research and the data.

### Mission Statement Discussion

Current Statement: "Helping people move to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships and advocacy"

*Facilitator: What is the reaction when we propose lopping it off at 'through'?*

What would make us different from other organizations if our mission statement is limited to "Helping people move to economic self-sufficiency" – does that reflect what we really do?

Our Environment in 2014

Internal

- Known as a responsive partner in Central Mass.
- Strong ties to municipalities, school districts and community partners
- Staff have good reputation and credibility
- Very strong, talented, forward thinking Board
- Excellent reputation with funders; current funding is strong and stable
- Large LIHEAP program puts us in a central role, keeps us visible, and provides an expanded opportunity for creative/bigger energy programs
- 90 - 98% job satisfaction in many survey categories

- We are not as big, well-known, responsive, and creative as we can be
- Staff and service history of doing business is stuck in some corners of the organization
- Facilities – parking, enough space, accessibility, new building for Healthy Families and Head Start to share, new roof at Woodward location, new playground at Southern Worcester County location
- Marketing and fundraising –we have built from ground zero, need to take to new levels
- Staff are stretched in too many directions due to funding cuts
- No Deputy Director or fundraising specialist
- A data collection system to show and tell more about the results that move people forward – in education and into jobs
- Some senior leaders are nearing retirement

External

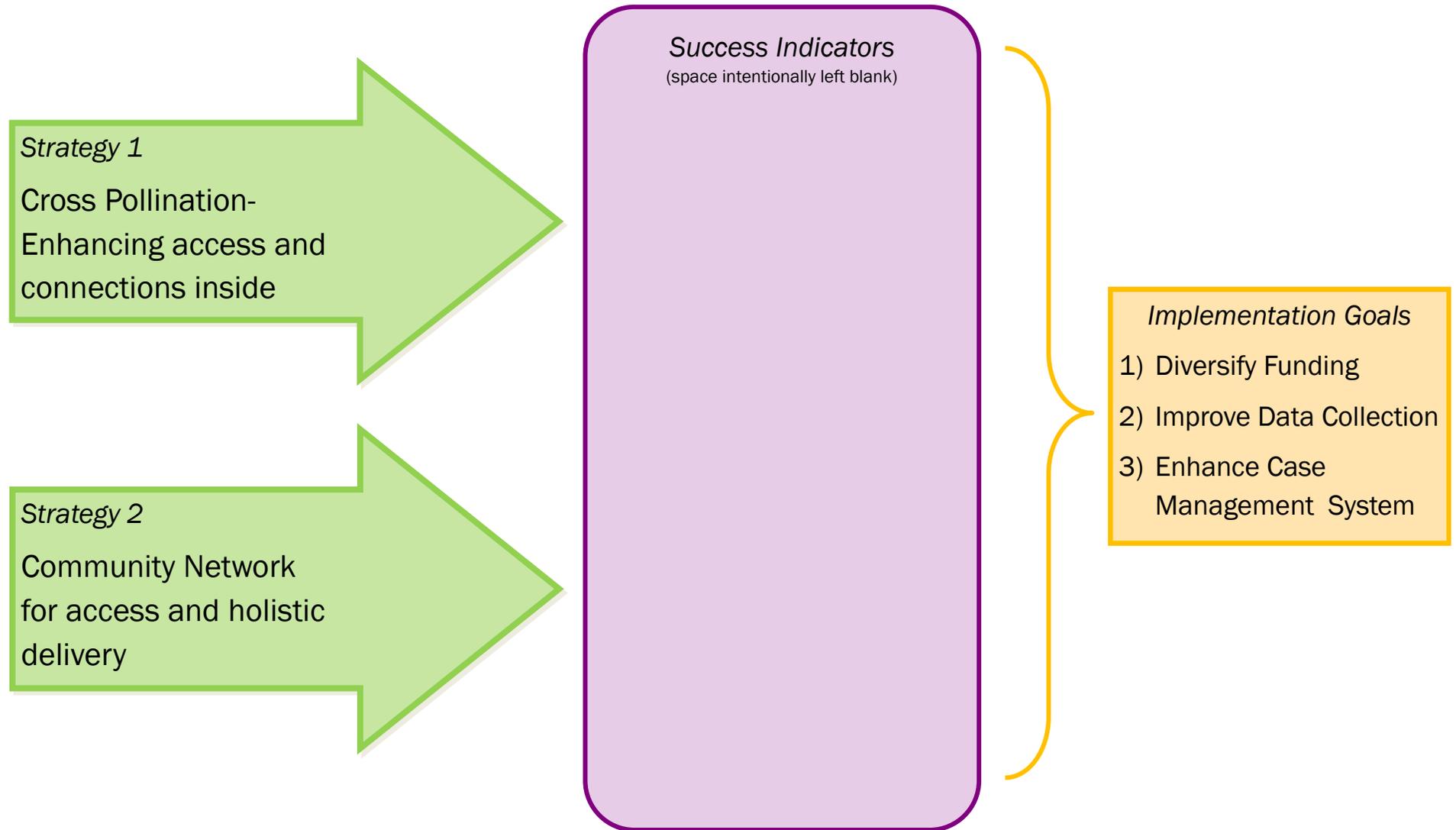
- Grow through timely, creative strategic alliances
- Expand, improve and integrate service delivery models that are streamlined and benefit customers more by reducing paperwork and multiple stops along the “service delivery pipeline”
- Co-locate buildings in Worcester; acquire better long-term funding for facilities; rely less on the towns and school districts (HS)
- Attitude toward collaboration is strong in Worcester; Local funders want fewer, not more, non-profits
- A strengthened MASSCAP system (in progress); seen by the Commonwealth as a “go-to system of non-profits for quality services.” DHCD and the federal government are re-tooling the regulations for outcome performance, new standards of service and organizational excellence, and more.
- Change the antipoverty image to self-sufficiency

- Ongoing national debate, pressure and oversight on regulations, funding
- Competition from peer agencies; peer non-profits and CAAs in our back yard
- Re-competition required (e.g. Head Start); the new norm will be to compete for funds every five years
- Shrinking funding; too many nonprofits competing for limited funds (public, private, corporate)
- Inaccessible, non existence public transportation in some service areas inhibits client access

Positive

Negative

WCAC Strategies for 2015-2017



*Success Indicators*  
(space intentionally left blank)

*Strategy 1*

Cross Pollination-  
Enhancing access and  
connections inside

*Strategy 2*

Community Network  
for access and holistic  
delivery

*Implementation Goals*

- 1) Diversify Funding
- 2) Improve Data Collection
- 3) Enhance Case Management System



**WORCESTER COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL  
STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Presentation to the Board  
June 16, 2014

1

## THEORY OF CHANGE

- ❖ Mission  
*“Helping people move to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships and advocacy.”*
  - ❖ Core Principles
    - ❖ Commitment to service excellence
    - ❖ Accountability
    - ❖ Reliability
    - ❖ Trusted Partner
  - ❖ WCAC’s impact model is:  
“If we do this ....., then we will have an impact”
    - ❖ Increasing Accessibility
    - ❖ Building Relationships and Trust
- 2

## IMPACT LOOKS LIKE THIS

- ❖ Children enter kindergarten ready to learn
  - ❖ Youth achieve their Hi-Set and find a job
  - ❖ People stay warm in the winter without experiencing financial hardship to do so
  - ❖ Clients obtain tax refunds that are otherwise difficult to access
  - ❖ Teen parents become more skilled parents and raise healthier children
- 3

## SERVICES WE PROVIDE

- Energy Assistance
  - Employment and Education
  - Youth and Family Development
  - Asset Development
- 4

## COMMUNITY NEEDS

❖ *Most pressing needs identified by our clients:*

Employment opportunities	49.6%
Affordable heat and utilities	47.9%
Getting a good education/ graduating from HS	40.8%
Affordable housing	40.4%
Affordable food	38.8%
Job training	35.0%
Transportation	34.2%
Affordable healthcare	28.8%
Help managing money	26.7%
Access to childcare	26.3%
Emergency financial assistance	17.1%
Assistance with legal issues	8.8%
Mental health resources	7.9%
Services for immigrants	5.8%
Assisted living services	5.8%
Services for disabled	5.4%
Other (please specify)	5%
Domestic violence resources	2.1%
Alcohol abuse resources	1.7%
Drug abuse resources	1.3%

Top 5 Responses

Other responses included:

- Language classes
- Needing an occasional babysitter
- Getting a masters degree, going to college
- Replacing a failed septic system
- Weatherization
- Real estate tax help
- Jobs for felony records
- Learning how to be a mom
- Citizenship assistance

Results from February 2014 WCAC Client Survey (265 respondents total)

5

## ORGANIZATION NEEDS

Job satisfaction and feeling valued by WCAC resonated for 90% of staff:

- ❖ Stronger, enhanced team
- ❖ Meaningful and competitive compensation strategy

Updated Infrastructure:

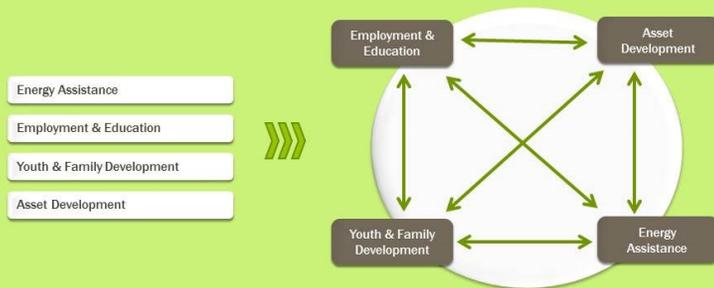
- ❖ Inviting and highly functional facilities
- ❖ Functional, integrated technology
- ❖ Accessible and flexible transportation

Adaptive, flexible client service:

- ❖ Flexible growth
- ❖ Empowered self-sufficient clientele
- ❖ Supportive case management
- ❖ Enhanced marketing and communications

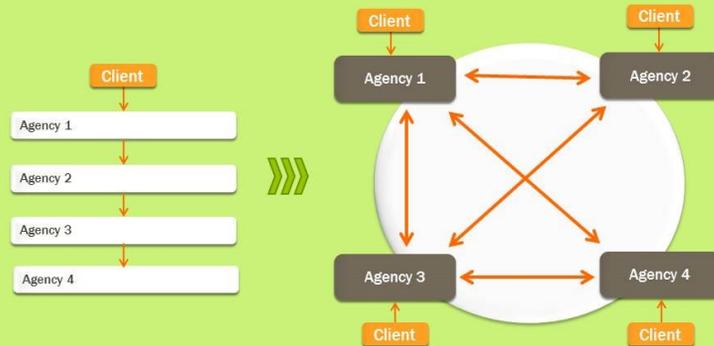
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## STRATEGY 1: CROSS POLLINATION ENHANCING ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS INSIDE



7

## STRATEGY 2: COMMUNITY NETWORK FOR ACCESS AND HOLISTIC DELIVERY



8

## ROADMAP TO STRATEGY 1: CROSS POLLINATION

Conditions that must be in place for access:  
(some examples)

- ❖ Transportation (vans, bus passes)
- ❖ Accessible locations (free parking, near public transportation)
- ❖ Inviting facilities
- ❖ Multiple use facilities
- ❖ Extended service hour access
- ❖ Child care
- ❖ Case advocates – *activators*
- ❖ Staff with many language proficiencies
- ❖ Cross trained staff – new staff teams

9

## ROADMAP TO STRATEGY 2: COMMUNITY NETWORK

Conditions required for realizing a *holistic community approach*:  
(some examples)

- ❖ Willing partners
- ❖ Strong credibility among potential partners
- ❖ Willingness to ‘put it on the table’
- ❖ An entrepreneurial spirit
- ❖ Clarity on strengths, weaknesses, and strategic advantage
- ❖ Willingness to let some programming be delivered by others
- ❖ *Other?*

10

## WCAC BOARD VISION

- ❖ What does a wildly successful WCAC look like in five years?
  
- ❖ What are the major accomplishments required to get there?

11

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

### ➤ WCAC Senior Management Meeting

July 2013

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*  
*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*  
*Kerry Brennan, Director of Human Resources*  
*Suresh Shah, Director of Finance*  
*Mary Knittle, Director of Energy*

Senior management discussed the upcoming strategic planning process, budget implications, and program direction.

### ➤ RFP Development

August 2013

Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development developed a Consultant RFP and contacted five (5) consultants. The RFP was also posted on WCAC's website.

### ➤ Consultant Selection

September - October 2013

Jill Dagilis, Executive Director, and Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development, reviewed the submission from Gammy Bird Consulting. They then contacted Nancy Jackson via phone and discussed the plan. A service agreement was developed and executed on 12/1/13 thru 9/2014 with a follow-up in 2015.

### ➤ WCAC Staff Discussion

November 2013

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*  
*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*  
*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*  
*Charla Hixson, Director of Job and Education Center and Asset Development Programs*

The group met to discuss an overarching strategy for the Community Action Plan process. Discussion centered on tweaking the process to do implement the process differently. A major focus would be to streamline the surveys so that customers are asked pertinent questions in a shorter format to ensure that surveys were completed. Focus groups will more interactive, and surveys to elected officials and funders will be no more than 4 pointed questions so that more responses will be returned.

### ➤ Board of Directors Meeting: Strategic Planning Joey's Bar + Grille

December 16, 2013

*Fourteen Board of Directors in attendance, along with staff: Jill Dagilis, Executive Director; Terra Oliveira, Administrative Assistant; Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development; Suresh Shah, Director of Finance; Mary Knittle, Director of Energy; and Kerry Brennan, Human Resources Director. Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

The Strategic Plan Consultant, engaged the Board of Directors in a 45-minute discussion regarding the mission, vision, and goals of the upcoming 3-year Community Action Plan along with strategic priorities.

Board member comments/observations included:

WCAC is mandated to deliver "certain" programs (e.g., Head Start, fuel—federally funded programs that total about 80% of the overall budget) thus restricting creativity.

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

How many programs do we want to run and where? Do we want to be everything to all people or focus on 3-4 programs we do well by creating more structure?

Headlines: what are success models to climb out of poverty? Capacity building is missing in the approach, and much of the evidence is anecdotal. How do we manage resources, options?

What is the evidence of need or how the program is successful? Funders require detailed and frequent reports (e.g., LIHEAP) that provide lots of data, but not necessarily success of our mission. We measure what funders tell us. We do what we get paid to do through the funding. Reporting so much hinders our capacity to serve. Where is room for strategic planning?

What are metrics of success or metrics of self-perpetuation?

We have limited resources to do what we want and do it differently; our hands are tied because of our relatively small pool of unrestricted income.

The Board and community know the needs/gaps in service best and have proven results when systems in place. Our strength is implementing these programs in our communities and knowing the partners.

At what level are we strategically planning?

Programs are heavily regulated with true measurements with goals and stretch goals. The pieces in between are critical on how to successfully reach the goal.

SNAP is an example of national program responding to a huge need, but that has to fight so hard/get through red tape to get the point across. That's the environment. Early childhood education is a huge need, but does not have strong partners.

Funding needed – strategy for more outside funding, corporate, foundation.

Utility funding was prioritized in the last strategic plan, and it has happened. Doesn't involve government and is unrestricted. We have been able to be creative in that program where less federal dollars are used, and we've earned income.

What is capacity, resources, to provide quality services?

In thinking creatively about expanding our network and partners: who benefits from work? Housing is the greatest bill for everyone. People qualify for fuel assistance, landlords benefit from financially stable tenants. Think creatively—real estate owners are benefiting from tenant stability. How are we engaging groups like that? How many people aren't we serving. We are not accessing people.

What program choices do we have? What are we doing that we think is mandated, but can be changed?

WCAC works with all community partners. Some of them do specialized work we little interest in getting into the business of. Maybe create incubator space in the building? WCAC has a citywide approach.

Do we have the capacity – internally to take on additional programs? Staffing?

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

Need to focus and be strategic. Who are the populations in need and are they getting services, proportionally? We may need to conduct more outreach and redistribute our energy to reach them.

### ➤ DHCD Meeting in Boston

December 16, 2013

Charla Hixson, WCAC Director of Job and Education Center and Asset Development Programs, attended DHCD's Strategic Planning overview meeting in Boston.

### ➤ Strategic Planning Meeting

January 7, 2014

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Charla Hixson, Director of Job and Education Center and Asset Development Programs*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

The group reviewed the Community Action Planning Guide for Fiscal Years 2015-2017, and Charla Hixson provided an overview of the DHCD meeting that was held in December.

Discussion centered on:

#### What are the organization's criteria?

We do programming well

Branding – everyone knows us

Do we take risks? Are we willing to take risks?

What are the mandates?

Where do we play, with whom, what is the geography, who are our competitors?

Select programs and outcomes – are they the very best?

#### What is the Board's role on delivering the strategic plan?

Adopt a corporate mentality and consistently ask – what's our aspiration? Vision? Vision for how to get there (funding from national corporations).

Continue to consider the Denholm Building (where WCAC is housed) as a nonprofit center.

What do we have to pull it off (internal capacity).

Board participation in the planning process: need special meeting of the board in March.

Teams of different levels of staff/board

Planning committee – Executive Board members to inform full board

Program committee – program managers to inform staff, Head Start policy council

#### Survey instruments

Youth-friendly surveys needed

Program Managers should assist in designing client surveys

#### Future Meetings

Review mission statement to all staff (especially new staff), at board meetings, program manager meetings

Tabulate in-kind from Board

Discuss how staff will be able to participate while working. Standing “program” meetings (e.g., education, head start, and energy) could also be used as a communication link.

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

### ➤ Strategic Planning Intern

January - June, 2014

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

Jill Dagilis and Donna McGrath interviewed Georgia Lawrence, Clark University graduate student, for an internship position working with the planning department to develop the strategic plan. A schedule was developed so that Donna and Georgia worked together three days per week for about 4-5 hours per day on the Community Action Plan.

A timeline in reverse chronological order was developed to ensure that each phase/step was completed on time. The draft was finalized on June 25 and sent to the Consultant for editing. Once reviewed, the Executive Director had 5 days in which to edit the draft. The WCAC Board of Directors Executive Committee reviewed and approved the plan including all appendices prior to full board meeting in late August. This ensured that the plan was submitted to DHCD by the August 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

### ➤ Strategic Planning Meeting

January 23, 2014

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

Group met to discuss surveys and to schedule focus groups. Georgia will work with Nancy to develop electronic survey on the website SurveyMonkey.com.

### ➤ Strategic Planning Meeting

February 7, 2014

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

The group discussed the locations, venues, and dates for the focus groups, with the expectation that these will be completed by the end of March. Facilitated conversation on trends and needs in Worcester and what WCAC's role should/could be. Comparison of demographics and any notable trends.

Client surveys will be translated into Vietnamese and Spanish. Following a quick front-desk poll after the meeting, the consensus was Arabic would be the third language for translation.

Each program manager will be given sets of client surveys (English, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Arabic) to distribute to clients in their programs. Clients will be asked to complete the surveys, and manually insert them in a box per program. For programs who work in the field (e.g., weatherization auditors, LIHEAP intake workers), clients will be given the survey and asked to complete it. Clients will insert them in sealed envelopes and pass them along to the WCAC workers who will return them to the WCAC.

Because each program varies in size, the question of what the sample size would be for each program came up. The group thought that a proportional metric could be used.

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

Staff will be given paper surveys (especially for use by staff who do not have electronic access), but Survey Monkey will also be developed so that staff will be able to complete the survey quickly.

The Focus Groups will be used for resource needs, as well.

Nancy will lead the USE (United Service Executives – Worcester nonprofit Executive Directors) group through a visual Trends/Wave:

Emerging trends → Swell → Crested Energy → Hollowness → Dying/Letting Go  
                  ↑                  ↑                  ↑                  ↑                  ↑  
Human needs, starting to  
Practices          take hold

Facilitated conversation on trends and needs in Worcester; what is WCAC's role

Comparison of 2012 to 2015 demographics-any noticeable trends?

Next Steps: Confirm Focus Group venues and dates. Email invitees to Focus groups. Translate surveys; distribute surveys; email/mail letters.

### ➤ Strategic Planning Meeting

**February 12, 2014**

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

Discussed vendors for client survey translations, dates and locations for focus groups, "types" of focus groups (e.g., elected officials, business/corporate partners, youth). Scheduled Oxford, Worcester, and Southbridge focus groups.

### ➤ Community Focus Groups and Client Surveys

**February 13 - 14, 2014**

Email groups were sent to organizations, leaders, and community members inviting them to participate in focus groups to be held in Oxford, Worcester, and Southbridge. The USE (United Service Executives) committee of Worcester will have a separate focus group on March 19, 2014 at WCAC's Board Room.

Finalized customer surveys to be translated: Lutheran Social Services will translate into Arabic at no cost; Central MA Area Health Education Coalition (CMAHEC) will translate into Spanish, and the Southeast Asian Coalition will translate into Vietnamese.

### ➤ Strategic Planning Meeting

**March 11, 2014**

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

Reviewed surveys, due dates, correspondence to staff, focus group invitees, and senior managers.

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

### ➤ “Bridges Out of Poverty: Part I”

March 26, 2014

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

*Robert Jennings, WCAC Board of Directors*

Attended “Bridges out of Poverty” symposium at the Sturbridge Conference Center.

Presentation was hosted by Lutheran Social Services of New England at which over 60 LSSNE employees attended. Economic classes discussed (generational poverty, middle class, and generational wealth)—not race or culture. Takeaway: accept where people are in that point in time. Accept people for who they are, not just tolerate.

Information brought back to WCAC which resulted in contracting with the presenter to provide the same workshop during a full-day staff retreat at Worcester State University on June 6, 2014 at which almost 120 staff attended (mandatory).

### ➤ Strategic Planning Meeting

May 14, 2014

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

Reviewed collated data to determine top 5 pressing needs. Collected strong data comparing Worcester to Southbridge statistics and will continue to advocate for CSBG funding for Southbridge, given the significant pocket of poverty.

Using the staff surveys and staff focus group discussions, ask Program Managers to work with staff to develop 2-3 actions to address needs in major categories (see focus group meetings for details). Once staff attend the June 6<sup>th</sup> Bridges Out of Poverty workshop during staff day, ask them to develop one more key action to make their program more accessible – what is the bridge? This will help to develop WCAC’s “theory of change.”

Organizational analysis will be developed in a separate section of the Community Action Plan when the Board of Directors are involved on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Board will be asked how to position for the future; where is their readiness?

Prep for June board meeting: provide up-to-date data, how will WCAC enhance its infrastructure?

Leverage programs.

### ➤ Strategic Planning Meeting

May 14, 2014

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

Discussed comparisons between Worcester and Southbridge. Any difference between the 5 most pressing needs? Rural vs. urban? What makes the list?

Board of Directors will review organization – analysis.

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

Plan goes to key actions agency committed for staff satisfaction, adaptive and flexible services.

Prep for June 16, 2014 board meeting.

➤ **Strategic Planning Meeting: Conference Call**

**June 2, 2014**

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

Prep for Board meeting includes scorecard for Board of Directors, show what we know.

WCAC wants to move in major directions and need conversation with board. The Strategic Plan Consultant will lead a structured visioning exercise. Executive Committee asked WCAC Senior Managers to explore.

Major directions: Executive Director's visioning over a 3-year period.

Send Board members Collective Impact Articles in advance of Board meeting.

➤ **Strategic Planning Meeting**

**June 4, 2014**

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

Prep for Board of Directors meeting.

➤ **Strategic Planning Meeting**

**June 11, 2014**

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

Discussion on plan preparation in visioning section and next step strategies.

From pillars to connections: theory of change, transformative life. Access to services, meeting people at their level, building relations (community/family).

Changing conversations about poverty.

➤ **Board of Director's Meeting: Strategic Planning  
UNUM, Paul Revere Conference Room**

**June 16, 2014**

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

Board of Director's meeting: Provided overview of Community Action Plan. Presented "Theory of Change" slideshow with questions and comments. Board Meeting Focus Group minutes are located in Appendix H.

## Internal Planning Meeting Minutes

### ► “Bridges Out of Poverty: Part II”

June 27, 2014

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*

*Kerry Brennan, Director of Human Resources*

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Mary Knittle, Director of Energy*

*Charla Hixson, Director of Job and Education Center and Asset Development Programs*

*Michelle Morrissey and Venelba Canales, Head Start Lead Staff*

The Part II training, held at the DCU in Worcester, MA, discussed the four components of poverty research continuum: behaviors of the individual, human and social capital in the community, exploitation, and political/economic structures. Community relationships need to be strengthened so many resources will provide a support safety net for people in poverty. The workshop offered valuable information on the “three voices” when staff work with customers: the child, parent, and adult and how to de-escalate situations. Other information focused on listening, understanding casual vs. formal language, and creating good relationships; being more client-centered while adhering to agency rules and regulations (e.g., no hugging, not acknowledging customers out of the office (similar to violating HIPAA laws). What are appropriate boundaries around culture and disabilities?

Staff need to try to “understand why they [customers] do what they do.” It is not tolerance, but acceptance. Essentially, the program challenges the agency to take this discussion to the community at large, as no single entity can make a meaningful impact without engaging support from other agencies.

### ► Strategic Planning Meeting

July 7, 2014

*Jill Dagilis, Executive Director*

*Kerry Brennan, Director of Human Resources*

*Donna McGrath, Director of Planning and Development*

*Nancy Jackson, Strategic Plan Consultant*

*Georgia Lawrence, Clark University Intern*

Discussion regarding strategic organizational changes as they relate to priority areas that emerged during the focus groups and surveys. Organizational structure may change to accommodate the primary program areas to include: Energy, Employment and Education, Youth and Families, and Asset Development. Further discussions will occur at the Board level.