



#### Special Thanks

On behalf of the Board of Directors and WCAC Staff, we offer a very special thanks to Steve Joseph, our out-going board chair. As a result of Steve's leadership, WCAC is strong, stable and responsive. The Board is diverse and active and we have maximized limited resources at every turn. We are grateful for your tireless efforts!

#### A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

"What can change the world today is the same thing that has changed it in the past - an idea and the service of dedicated, committed individuals to that idea." - Sargent Shriver

How fortunate Worcester Community Action Council is to have such a dedicated team of employees and a dynamic Board of Directors, all committed to helping individuals and families move to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships and advocacv.

Having undertaken a strategic planning process this past year, WCAC remains confident that while challenges related to poverty. income and economic opportunity continue, we are ready to face them head on.

As you browse through this annual report, please realize that it captures only a snapshot of the efforts made every day at WCAC to support our neighbors in need – helping first-time parents as they navigate the challenges of raising a newborn; imparting young children with early educational and literacy skills to establish a foundation for lifelong learning; helping at-risk teens and young adults develop skills to obtain employment or additional schooling;

providing quality childcare to allow parents to find secure employment; and ensuring people with disabilities, seniors, veterans and others with limited income remain warm in their homes.

We thank you for your support and look forward to working together to continue building a stronger community for us all.

With warm regards,



Jill C. Dagilis **Executive Director** 

Steven G. Joseph

Chairman of the Board



Visit our homepage at www.WCAC.net for our new **Community Impact Video** containing additional interviews with WCAC staff and clients.

**BOARD OF** 

Steven Joseph Chairman

Noreen Johnson Smith Vice Chairman

**Brian Westerlind** Treasurer

Michael Keegan Assistant Treasurer **Donald Xenos** 

Leslie Baker **Assistant Clerk** 

Clerk

**Peter Martin** Dale Allen **Pedro Aponte Eric Batista** Marybeth Campbell Kathryn Crockett **Steven Desmarais Tom Dubay Eve Gilmore** Joanne Gravell

Barbara Haller Olta Kodra Donna Lombardi Alejandro Mango Radames Pagan

Gladys Rodriguez-Parker Karen Rucks





#### Children & Families

- » Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County (HFSWC) provided 2,798 home visits to families promoting positive parenting choices and the prevention of child abuse and neglect to 94 first-time parents.
- » With the support of HFSWC, infants and toddlers obtained age-appropriate immunizations, medical and dental care, including 94 receiving direct medical care access; 24 direct dental care access; and 38 who were fully immunized by 2 years of age.
- » Head Start served 235 preschoolers from 219 families during the 2016-17 school year; 106 in full-day, 97 in a part-day program, which allowed 139 parents to hold employment and another 89 who were able to pursue school or job training.

- » Ninety-eight preschoolers 'graduated' from the agency's Head Start program and enrolled in Kindergarten, ready and eager to learn due to the 'head start' afforded them.
- » WCAC is proud of our highly credentialed Head Start teaching staff: three hold Master's degrees; 13 hold Bachelor's degrees and 8 hold Associate's degrees.
- Classrooms were supported throughout the school year by 586 volunteers – 556 of whom were current or former Head Start parents.
- » Early Head Start Home Educators conducted 2,055 home visits for infants and toddlers, serving as a strong feeder program for Head Start with many families remaining enrolled from a child's birth to age 5.





WCAC HEAD START
SERVED 235
PRESCHOOLERS
ALLOWING 139 PARENTS
TO HOLD EMPLOYMENT

### Energy Assistance

- » WCAC processed 14,048 applications for fuel assistance, including 1,971 first-time applicants
- » Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provided 12,260 certified-eligible households with fuel assistance benefits totaling \$8,476,341, distributed via 73 local vendors and utilities.
- » 40% of those households receiving fuel assistance were seniors; 15% were households with children under the age of six; 43% of households were either self-employed or otherwise earning wages; 70% of applicants were receiving Social Security or Disability benefits.
- » Weatherization, insulation, heating system repairs/ replacement services were provided to 826 households, totaling over \$2.4 million in local investment.
- » The National Grid sponsored Appliance Management Program (AMP) provided 627 households with efficient replacement lightbulbs, refrigerators, freezers and power strips, while promoting money-saving energy education.



12,260 HOUSEHOLDS

FUEL ASSISTANCE TOTALING \$8,476,341

THE APPLIANCE
MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM PROVIDED
627
HOUSEHOLDS

ENERGYEFFICIENT
REPLACEMENT
REFRIGERATORS,
LIGHTBULBS AND
POWER STRIPS





2,496
FUEL
DELIVERIES
AND UTILITY
PAYMENTS

TO HOUSEHOLDS FACING NO-HEAT EMERGENCIES

826 HOUSEHOLDS WEATHERIZATION, INSULATION, OR HEATING SYSTEM REPAIR/





#### **Education & Employment**

- » 30 youth completed the Job & Education Center's Work-Readiness program, learning valuable pre-employment skills such as writing and submitting a resume, along with post-employment skills such as workplace etiquette and a review of basic labor laws.
- » Utilizing a combination of public, private and state funding, 279 youth received subsidized employment at 56 worksites with public/private employment partners through the YouthWorks Summer Jobs Program.
- » 25 youth were hired for non-subsidized, permanent posts by their employer at the conclusion of the seven-week summer jobs program.
- » Despite seeing students with greater needs and lower academic levels, and facing ever increasing educational standards, WCAC instructional staff supported 13 youth in successfully achieving their High School Equivalency Certificate through the Project Excel and WINGS programs. Approximately 49 youth remain enrolled at varying levels of completion, working towards their HiSET and other work-readiness credentials.
- » 15 individuals are enrolled in the agency's Secure Jobs Program, which offers support and assistance in attaining living wages for homeless families.

- » 39 youth completed a jobs program through the Community Safety Initiative, with 5 securing employment.
- » Five young men participated in the Safe & Successful Youth Initiative and secured employment.
- » 18 youth either enrolled in college or completed a career pathway certificate program.
- » JEC hosts events each year to engage alumni, engage youth in leadership roles, and to develop relationships with employer partners. An estimated 200 alumni remain connected to WCAC services.



18 YOUTH
EITHER ENROLLED IN
COLLEGE OR COMPLETED
A CAREER PATHWAY
CERTIFICATE
PROGRAM



30 YOUTH
COMPLETED THE
WORK-READINESS
PROGRAM



#### Emergency Assistance

- » The agency processed 88 families' applications through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and made referrals for emergency food assistance.
- » 2,496 fuel deliveries and utility payments were made to households facing no-heat emergencies, funded through generous private donations to the agency's Emergency Fuel Fund and in partnership with local fuel vendors.

2,496
EMERGENCY
FUEL DELIVERIES AND
UTILITY PAYMENTS





FAMILIES'
FOOD ASSISTANCE
APPLICATIONS
PROCESSED

#### Asset Development

- » 30 volunteers donated 1,066 hours to prepare income tax returns at no cost for 793 low-income households, resulting in \$1,355,445 in returns.
- » City-wide through the Worcester Free Tax Service Coalition, a total of 1,965 households were served with a total of \$3.4 million returned to the local economy.



#### ON THE MOVE

#### IN SEPTEMBER, WCAC WELCOMED LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR KARYN POLITO, CONGRESSMAN JAMES P. MCGOVERN AND OTHER STATE AND

LOCAL OFFICIALS for the announcement of public resources totaling \$1.1 million dollars to support its renovation of the former Webster senior center located at 116 School Street in order to relocate four of the agency's Head Start classrooms to Webster.

Lieutenant Governor Polito announced that WCAC was awarded \$600,000 from the Baker-Polito Administration's 2017 Early Education and Care Out-of-School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund. WCAC was one of five agencies across the state selected to receive funding.

Congressman McGovern announced that \$500,000 in one-time capital funds were committed to the project through the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

"We are thrilled to be receiving these important resources which will allow us to bring critical Head Start services back to a community where they are needed," said WCAC Executive Director Jill Dagilis. "This represents the culmination of several years of hard work to identify a site that addresses the needs of Webster's working families and their children. WCAC is indebted to the many generous

funders, public officials and other partners for helping to make this project possible."

In February 2015, WCAC was forced to evacuate its former Oxford, MA site due to a roof compromised by extreme winter weather. In the time since, the 87 children displaced by the loss of that site were relocated into three additional classrooms at the agency's Southbridge site. WCAC has bussed the children, primarily from Webster, to Southbridge at great inconvenience to the families and children served and at great cost to the organization.

In addition to the public funds secured to date, WCAC is working with MassDevelopment and undertaking a private fundraising campaign to raise the balance needed to support the estimated \$2.3 million-dollar project. A 2018 opening of the new classrooms is projected.





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### HEROES IN ACTION

EVERY MAY, DURING COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH, WCAC HOSTS ITS ANNUAL ACTION HERO AWARDS CELEBRATION recognizing individuals and corporations who have gone above and beyond in supporting our mission of helping people reach economic self-sufficiency. Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito was this year's keynote speaker. Among those honored this past spring was Charlton Oil – one of more than seventy local fuel or utility vendors we contract with to deliver fuel to Low Income Home Energy Assistance clients. During the winter of 2015-16, Charlton Oil delivered nearly \$400,000

worth of fuel to 579 low income clients. Additionally, they completed 318 service calls and replaced 88 inefficient or non-functioning heating systems. Beyond that work, Charlton Oil made many referrals to WCAC when they recognized prospective fuel clients who were struggling and were likely eligible for our fuel assistance and weatherization programs.

Our other 2017 Action Hero honorees included: the University of Massachusetts Medical Healthcare, Biodun Akande, and our own Head Start program celebrating 25 years of service.

#### STRATEGICALLY PLANNING

## WORCESTER COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL RECENTLY COMPLETED A COMPREHENSIVE

community and internal assessments through surveys, focus groups and direct interviews with WCAC staff. Trends and themes emerged to reveal top needs: improved language access, transportation, child care, youth employment and financial literacy, as well as expanding the agency's leadership role to strengthen collaboration regarding poverty initiatives. WCAC remains committed to excellence, with best practices and accountability for all of our clients, programs, staff and stakeholders to ensure those in need receive valuable services that help them move to economic self-sufficiency. A copy of the strategic plan is now available on the agency's website, www.WCAC.net.



#### A HEAD START ON THE AMERICAN DREAM

WHEN RABIE IBRAHIM WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMMIGRATE TO THE UNITED STATES FROM HIS NATIVE EGYPT, HE FELT LIKE HE HAD WON THE LOTTERY. A civil engineer by trade, he looked forward to increased opportunity and a brighter economic future in America. He secured his American citizenship and worked to learn the English language. Unsuccessful in finding employment within his field, he worked a myriad of jobs including several in the restaurant industry before settling in Southbridge with his wife, Amany Roman, to be near a church of their faith.

The couple was first referred to WCAC's Head Start program when their oldest daughter exhibited a speech delay. Eliora is now thriving in public kindergarten with dreams of becoming a dentist. Her younger sisters, 3-1/2 year old twins Eliaria and Elianna, are now enrolled in Head Start and doing well.

"Head Start has helped our daughters learn the language,"
Rabie said, noting he now often learns new words from
them himself. "It has allowed them to learn and grow so they
will be ready for school and not be behind." Additionally,
Head Start has allowed Amany to attend classes at the
New England Dental Assistant School, from where she
recently received her license and will begin to pursue job

opportunities in that field. Knowing her children were well cared for gave her the freedom to pursue a career and set a strong example for her daughters.

Rabie recently took over ownership of Great Oak Pizza in Southbridge. And while the challenges of owning your own business and raising a young family are many, the couple remains optimistic that their hard work will pay off. And despite their struggles, both believe that they and their daughters face a brighter future here than amidst Egypt's poor economy and persistent religious persecution. "Here there is freedom," he says. "You have to work hard but there is freedom."

Head Start has helped our daughters learn the language. It has allowed them to learn and grow so they will be ready for school and not be behind.

Rabie Ibrahim

#### FUTURE FOCUSED

## "I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE I'M GOING BUT I KNOW IT'S GOING TO BE AWESOME,"

says Selina Otero, 19, of Worcester, a graduate of WCAC's WINGS HiSET program. She is now enrolled in Quinsigamond Community College's Future Focus program – a one year supportive program that provides learners with the tools to succeed as they transfer into higher education. She plans to pursue a career as a pharmacist.

Selina fell off the traditional high school education track after relocating from Worcester to Florida with her mother to escape a very bad situation at home. Frustrated when school credits from Massachusetts wouldn't carry over, she dropped out of school and moved to the south before returning to Worcester to live with her sister. After several months of coaxing and prodding from WCAC staff, she finally enrolled at WCAC and completed her HiSET. "The staff really stayed on top of me with phone calls and emails to encourage me," she recalls. "They were a very important part of the process. I would really encourage other youth to take advantage of this time, this place. If you don't feel like high school is right for you, there is a second option. This is so much more than a 'good enough' diploma."

"And for parents, I would encourage them to give their child an option – always push them to go to school but if it doesn't work out know there is another choice. You can encourage them to come to WCAC," Selina added.





This is so much more than a 'good enough' diploma.



## 2017 IN-KIND GOODS AND SERVICES

#### Coat Drive

Avalon Marlborough Commerce Bank National Grid

National Grid Customer Care Outreach Team

Dianne Schiavone

Denise Wilhemi

#### Head Start

Apple Tree Arts

Avalon Marlborough

Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School

Big Y Food, Inc.

Loda Blackmer

Bowditch & Dewey

Brittany Molloy

Mayra Callahan

Kiahna Carrasco-Torres

Daisy Carrion

Heriberto Cintron

Jennifer Cyr

Sarah Doiron

Melanie Dunlevy

Ellen Finelli

Kayla Gilleren

Hatch Early Childhood

Ashley Hickman

Lisa Hickman

Jitza Vazquez

Mary Jordan

Kennedy Donovan Center

Kids Zone Dental

Cassies Leslie

Meggan McDonald

Cynthia Nalia

Nova Armstrong

Vilmary Ortiz

Cristy Pena

Petco Foundation

Mary Lou Pope

Massachusetts Head Start Association

Price Chopper Golub

Foundation

Simple Indulgence Day Spa Southbridge Public Library

Southbridge Public Schools

Lisa Turner

Tyler Leveille

United Way of Southbridge, Sturbridge, Charlton

Evelyn Velez

Lisa Wagner

WGBH

YOU Inc.

Alisha Zimmerman

Head Start Policy Council

## Healthy Families

Department of Transitional Assistance

Pam DiScipio

Ellen M. Ganley

Fallon Health

Harrington Hospital Self-Wellness Program

Harrington Hospital/

Childbirth Education

Jacob Edwards Library

Kennedy Donovan Center

Kids Unlimited Services, Inc.

Learn Your Options

Terry McCormack

New Hope, Inc.

Jim Powers

Price Chopper

Jodi Rymer

South Bay Community Services

South County Community Partnership

South County Pediatrics

Southbridge Community Connections

Southbridge Department of Recreation

Deacon Bill Shea

Lisa Sullivan

Tri-Community YMCA

Tufts Health Plan

Voices with Choices – YOU Inc.

WIC South Central

Your Life Matters

## Job & Education Center

Addie Lee Soul Food Citizens Bank John L. Berger Dani Chunga

Cooking Matters
Dress for Success Worcester

Tom Dubay

Future Focus Media Co-op

Gearbox Software

Guild of St. Agnes Childcare

Liberty Construction

Peter Martin

MassEdCO

Masterman's

Quinsigamond Community

College

Radames Pagan

Rutland Public Library

Table Talk Pies

Think Geek HQ

Troy B. Thompson Photography

United States Marines

Unity

Worcester Probation Office Robert Workman

YWCA

### Agency-Wide

Charter Communications

The Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts

Music Worcester, Inc.

PENTA Communications, Inc.

VITA Volunteers

Worcester Business Development Corporation

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



## FY2017 ANNUAL APPEAL DONORS

## Supporting Members: \$1 – \$99

Abbvie Employee Enagment Fund Gloria & Lawrence Abramoff

Carmen Altiery

Leslie Baker

Snjezana Bosnjak

Cakes By Heather Elizabeth Campanale

MaryLou Doherty

Pamela Farley

Joshua Froimson

Eve Gilmore

Hassett & Donnelly, P.C.

Charla Hixson

Christina Howard Christean Hughes

Grazyna LaFrance

Flavia Laza

Thuha Le Rodney Lee

Darris C Laura N

Barry & Laura Maloney

Jeannette Martinez

Rosanne Matulaitis

Marcia and Michael Mills

John Monfredo

Denise Morrell

Margaret E. O'Connor

Tammy Parella

Susan J. Perschbacher

In Memory of Thomas & James

Petrella

Brenda Polleys

Marjorie H. Purves Annette Rafferty

Janet Rivard

Gladys Rodriguez-Parker

Robert Scherer Yvette Serrano Cynthia St. Germain

Donna Bunker-Swanstrom

Pamela Turner

Maryann Whalen Judith Whittle

# Founding Members: \$100 - \$299

Peter Bagley Norman Bitsoli Bob Blackman Clark Burritt

Christine Consolmagno

Judge John Conte

James Cosgrove

In Memory of Connie Turner and Nora Donahue

Michael & Lynne Crawford

Katie Crockett

Dix and Sarah Davis

Camille Diaz Kathleen Dow

Francis Ford & Shirley Doyle

EcoTec, Inc.
David Frechette
Ellen M. Ganley
Joanne Gravell

David & Rosalie Grenon

Barbara G. Haller

Maryanne M. Hammond

Dale Harger Priscilla Holmes

Noreen Johnson Smith

Helen Kantor Mark LaPan

Cheryl & Joseph Lapriore

Peter Martin Mastermans, LLP Donna McGrath Steven McIntosh

Millbury Federal Credit Union

Millbury Savings Bank

Anne O'Brien
Carrick O'Brien

Winifred Octave

Michael J. O'Hara

Terra Oliveira

Lamoureux Pagano & Associates

David & Amy Peterson

Michelle Ramirez

Mary Louise Retelle

J. Robert Seder

Dayton Semerjian

Dorothea Simmons

William Smits

Susan Stone

George Tetler

Susan and Alan Tubman

Wanda Wachira

#### Susan Mailman & James Chapdelaine

The Guru Tax & Financial Service, Inc.

Deborah Penta

Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Sigel Unum Matching Gift Program

#### Leaders: \$501+

Kerry A. Brennan

Ann L. DeBiasio

Jill & Paul Dagilis

Christine Fant

National Grid

Michael & Joyce Keegan

Susan & Andrew Mais

William A. Van Dam

Judith Whittle

## Champions: \$300 - \$500

Warner and Mary Fletcher Kathleen Johnson

Steven & Leona Joseph Mary & Robert Knittle



## FY2017 PRIVATE GRANTS & DONATIONS

#### 11th Annual Action Heroes Celebration

AllCom Credit Union

Anna Maria College

Bollus Lynch

Marybeth Campbell

Commerce Bank & Trust Company

Community Networks Corporation

Dexter-Russell

Fidelity Bank

Fraticelli Oil Company, Inc.

Glickman Kovago & Company Inc.

Guild of St. Agnes

Imperial Distributors

Michael and Joyce Keegan

Mutual of America

National Grid

Polar Beverages

Quinsigamond Community College

Risk Strategies Company

UMass Memorial Healthcare

Unum

Webster Five

Worcester Business Development Corporation

Worcester State University

# Holiday Happening at Hanover Theatre

Dale Allen, Meredith Galena & the 1421 Transformation Group

Kathleen Dow

Christine and Jeffrey Fant

Barbara G. Haller

Anne O'Brien

Carrick O'Brien

Worcester Center for Performing Arts

#### Coat Drive

Bay State Savings Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Mirick O'Connell Attorneys at Law

TJX Foundation

National Grid

Shawn Cody

United Way of Central MA – United 4 Good

#### Fuel Assistance

James R. Buonomo and Paula Rowse Buonomo Fund

Quinsigamond Village Clergy Association Steven & Michele Desmarais

Southbridge Savings Bank

Richard Ellison

Dr. Timothy Emhoff

Michelle Fernald

Cindy French

Erin Guyette

Stephen Heard

Dr. Richard Irwin

Nancy Isabell

Adam Katz

Brenda Lasorsa

Craig Lilly

Gurudev Lotun

Dr. Mark Madison

Kathleen Menard

Mirick O'Connell

Susanne Muehlschlegel

Marie Mullen

National Grid

Steven Nordborg

Dr. Paulo Oliveira

Teresa Rincon

Ryan Shipe

Nicholas Smyrnios

Susan Starkey

Susan Tarrant UniBank

#### Head Start

Children's Investment Fund C/O Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation

Greater Worcester Community Foundation

Janet Malser Humanities Trust

Southbridge Credit Union

Southbridge Cultural Council

Stop & Shop New England

Webster Five Foundation

#### Job & Education Center

Capital One

Tom Dubay

Public Health Solutions, LLC

## Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

Cornerstone Bank Southbridge Credit Union

#### YouthWorks

AbbVie Inc.

Bank of America Charitable Foundation

Fred Harris Daniels Foundation

Greater Worcester Community Foundation

NORESCO

The Schwartz Charitable Foundation

#### Unrestricted

George I. Alden Trust

Melvin S. Cutler Charitable Foundation

The George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation



Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these lists. Please let us know if we have made an error. Thank you.



## FINANCIALS 2017\*

#### Sources of Funds

MA Department of Housing	
& Community Development	\$12,184,254
Earned Revenue Fees	2,414,372
Federal Funding – Direct	2,533,471
City of Worcester – Pass Through	849,370
In-Kind Contributions	592,307
The Children's Trust Fund	298,146
State Revenues - Other	176,277
MA Department of Public Health	116,465
Corporate, Foundation & Private Gran	ts 492,959
United Way	202,871
MA Department of Early Ed. & Care	166,754
MA Department of Education	153,612
Individual Donations	26,791
Local Government	11,033
Other Income	6,948

Total Sources of Funds \$20,225,630

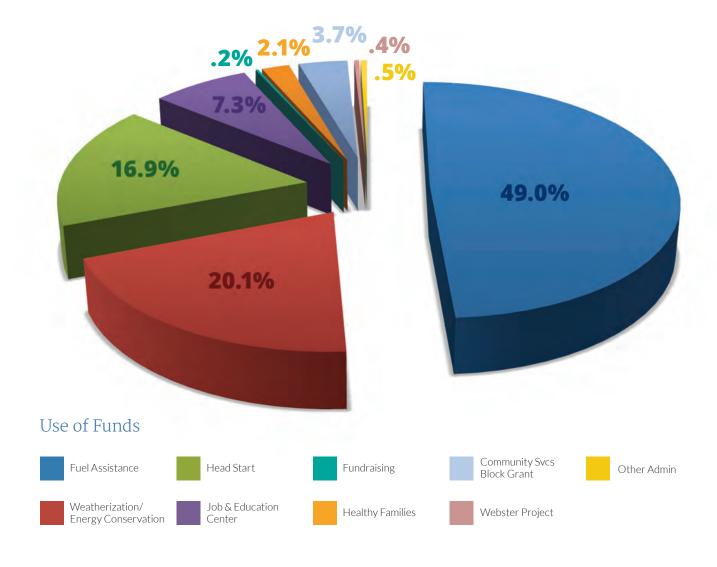
<sup>\*</sup>Unaudited Financial Statement WCAC's fiscal year is October 1 to September 30.

#### Use of Funds

Fuel Assistance	\$9,878,686
Weatherization/	
Energy Conservation	4,041,288
Head Start	3,398,622
Job & Education Center	1,468,286
Fundraising	41,396
Healthy Families	415,638
Community Svcs Block Grant	736,121
Webster Project	74,728
Other Admin	94,913

Total Use of Funds \$20,149,678

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





Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.

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

THE ANTIPOVERTY AGENCY FOR CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

www.wcac.net Phone 508.754.1176 Fax 508.754.0203



WORCESTER COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL INC.'S MISSION IS

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