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# Tompkins Community Action

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*an active community can produce powerful change*



Annual Report - 2017

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# What are Community Action Agencies?

During President Lyndon Johnson’s 1964 State of the Union Address, he said *“this administration, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty.”* Through that declaration, Community Action Agencies were created and today there are more than 1100 agencies serving 99% of the counties in the United States. President Johnson and Congress envisioned a Great Society and the need to provide people with low incomes not only resources but tools for achieving self-sufficiency. That vision became the mission of Community Action Agencies and remains our mission today.



In 1964 the Economic Opportunity Act passed with a singular mandate — *“to mobilize the human and economic resources of the Nation to combat poverty in the United States.”* The Act defined our societal success “only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of [their] capacities and to participate in the workings of our society.” Community Action Agency goals were defined as “enabling low-income persons to achieve self-sufficiency; that poor people should be provided with opportunities where their efforts would facilitate moving into the mainstream of American life.” For the first time legislation not only defined the need for economic resources; it mandated participatory training to ensure involvement by low-income people in voicing their vision of the future. By the end of 1966, Community Action Agencies were forming nationwide, in both urban and rural areas, answering the call to the unconditional war on poverty.



The Office of Economic Opportunity was established in 1964 to implement the War on Poverty. Its first Director was Sargent Shriver. He believed passionately that we could end poverty and spent his life championing that effort. He helped create the first programs for Community Action Agencies (CAA) that year: JobCorps, Youth Work Training and Vista. In 1965 Shriver spearheaded the creation and implementation of Head Start. In its first year, it served 850,000 families in an eight week summer program. The Civil Rights Act of 1968 established a provision for Section 8 Housing Vouchers. That year CAA’s were awarded funds through the Department of Housing and Urban Development starting a history of CAA funding from multiple Federal agencies. In 1976 the Department of Energy established the Weatherization Assistance Program and CAA’s began to implement energy remediation that is today as essential to the well being of our residents as it was at its inception.



The 1967 Amended Act further defined the purpose of CAA’s - “to stimulate a better focusing of all available local, state, private and federal resources upon the goal of enabling low income families and individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas to attain skills, knowledge and motivations to secure opportunities to be self sufficient.” Congress saw CAA’s as pivotal participants in coordinating community resources and outreach. CAA’s would have the ability to blend multiple funding streams to provide comprehensive programs. CAA’s would act as a “bridge” between public funders, enlisting the private sector and those they sought to serve. Today TCAAction works in partnership with Tompkins County organizations and institutions; leveraging resources, coordinating referrals, and actively participating in the community to reach low-income residents.



Since the first uttering of the War on Poverty there has been an on-going debate about both the measurement of poverty and program effectiveness. Indeed, many agencies at the Federal level have varying thresholds defining poverty and in turn program participation. In 1981 Congress established the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) to fund CAA’s nationwide. Although today these funds only represent approximately 10% of CAA budgets, the program serves to provide national unified reporting and measurement. The Government Accounting Office monitors CSBG funds; and in 2000 they reported that CAA’s were effective community agents; reducing duplications and effectively reaching those intended to benefit from the Economic Opportunity Act. In 2002 the Office of Community Services reported that CAA’s were delivering comprehensive programs and services to approximately one fourth of all people living in poverty in the United States.

## Harriet Giannelis Childcare Center and Amici House - Opening 2019







TCAction program delivery is administered through three Departments: Family Services, Energy Services and Housing Services. Our service philosophy is based on the Family Development Model, which redirects the way health, education and human services are delivered to families. This model moves systems away from crisis-oriented, fragmented services toward an empowerment, support-based approach to working with families. Family Development emphasizes strength-based partnerships, mutual respect, interagency collaboration and family-centered services.

TCAction Head Start and Early Head Start programs served 350 children and their families. Program services were provided to pregnant women, newborns and children up to five years old, in classrooms and families’ homes. With 16 classrooms county-wide and 9 Ithaca City School District classroom collaborations, children and families received high quality, developmentally appropriate education individualized to enhance learning and access community resources in preparing our children for a lifetime of learning. Utilizing High-Scope Curriculum, focused on five school readiness domains, this year’s child assessments reflected achievement across all domains. Children’s approaches to learning increased by 37%; reflecting their abilities to problem solve, plan, and expand their initiative. Language and literacy skills increased by 35% and physical development skills scores increased by 39%. Social skills increased by 37%. Children’s math and science skills increased by 37%; these gains were enhanced utilizing the ECHOS science curriculum implemented through a collaboration with our local Sciencenter. Family services included socialization activities, Parent Action Groups, training, secondary education opportunities and seminars throughout the year. Transition to Kindergarten included a variety of activities, such as panel discussions with school district personnel, principals speaking at Parent Action Groups, and school visits to cafeterias, libraries and gymnasiums. Our Primary School Support Program worked closely with parents and school officials to strengthen relationships for children in their first years of public school. Advocates supported families at parent-teacher conferences, coordinated services for children with special needs and supported positive communication between families and school staff. We served 87,073 breakfasts, lunches and snacks to children and families with expanded activities that linked LANA nutrition curriculum to the home. Serving Up the Harvest activities provided families with extended nutrition education and opportunities to acquire cooking skills. Collaborating with Finger Lakes Community Health has provided for dental screenings and cleanings for children while reinforcing oral health care in the home through child and family education and supplies. Our Family Home Library provided 3,133 books and activities to family homes funded through the Park Foundation. U.S. Department of Health & Human program funding totaled \$3,494,501. Of which \$2,380,363 supported wages and fringe benefits, \$758,183 for operations, \$241,992 in contracted services and \$61,409 for consumables. An additional \$55,661 of funding expanded staff and parent education and training.



The Emergency Food Pantry was visited 4899 times by households with low income who, once a month, were able receive a three-day supply of nutritious food, personal hygiene products and household supplies. The TCAction Victory Garden provided tools, compost, buckets, seeds, and approximately 15,000 seedlings to 265 consumer households.

We provided Housing Choice Voucher Program rental assistance to 1079 households and paid out \$8,444,380.00 in rental subsidy to landlords. One hundred and fourteen households participated in the Family Self Sufficiency Program, of which 53 FSS participants developed savings accounts as a result of an increase in earned income. Three households purchased their first home as part of our Homeownership Program and used their FSS escrow funds for a down payment. As a partner of the Solutions to End Homelessness Program of Tompkins County, TCAction provided financial assistance and supportive services to 20 households to assist them help stabilize their housing and prevent eviction. We also assisted fourteen people in transitioning out of, or avoiding entering a nursing home with rental subsidies from the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Program. Our Supportive Housing for Families Program provided permanent supportive housing to 8 young, pregnant or parenting families experiencing homelessness with safe and stable affordable housing at the Corn Street Apartments. Chartwell House provided affordable and safe permanent supportive housing for 18 previously homeless men in substance dependence recovery. Magnolia House provided affordable and safe permanent supportive housing for 21 women in recovery who were experiencing homelessness, 8 of whom had young children living with them and another 4 who were working toward reunification with their children. In all, TCAction Supportive Housing Programs’ service delivery focuses on supporting tenants with Early Head Start/Head

Start programming, building life and housing stability skills, securing and maintaining employment, and furthering education goals. Our Building Performance Institute certified energy technicians performed energy audits, efficiency upgrades and resident education to save energy for little or no money. This year, 45 households with low incomes benefited from our Weatherization Assistance Program. Three families made energy improvements through Assisted Home Performance with Energy Star, which provides income-eligible households with a 50% subsidy for efficiency upgrades. Through Green Jobs-Green New York twelve additional families from all income levels chose TCAction to complete their home energy assessments. Fifty- seven households with low-incomes received electricity reduction measures through TCAction’s Empower NY, 21 of these households received Energy Reduction Measures and 36 received Home Performance Measures.



The National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) was founded in 1981 with the purpose of representing CAAs and their state and regional associations in Washington, D.C. Current Executive Director David Bradley, with the mentorship of Sargent Shriver, co-founded the organization in an effort to ensure that the federal government continued to support the Community Action Program. The New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) was created in 1987 to provide New York State Community Action Agencies with information, professional development, and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of agencies to serve as effective, responsive community resources. New York State has 49 Community Action Agencies, all of which are NYSCAA members. Additionally, NYSCAA serves the collective interests of its members through statewide legislative advocacy, information exchange, capacity-building, peer support, recognition and information technology services

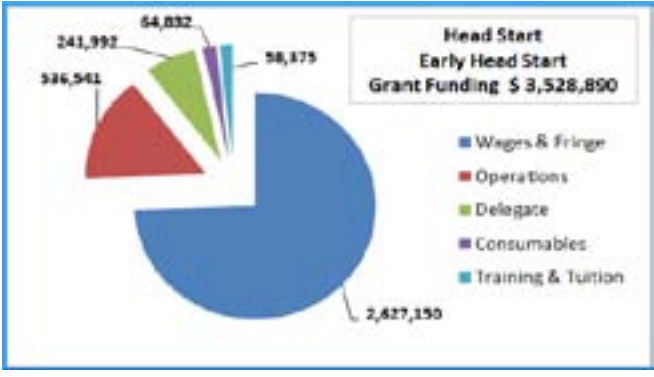
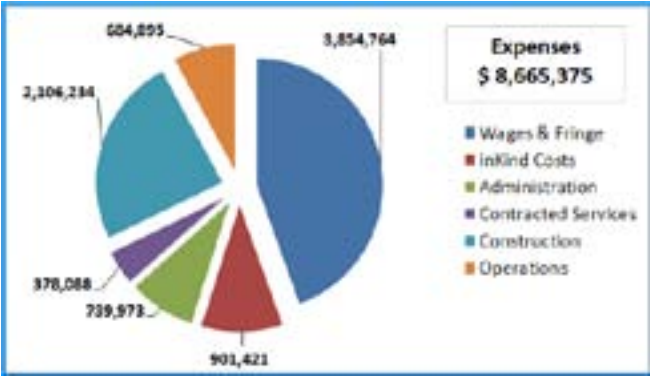
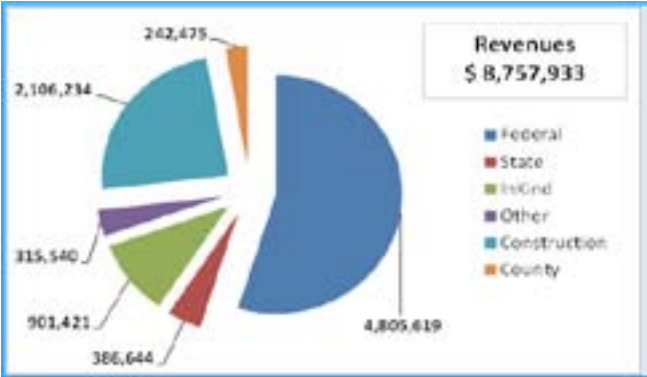


Tompkins Community Action is a private, not for profit charitable organization that had its grassroots beginning in 1964. Originally, Tompkins County Economic Opportunity Corporation, or EOC, as it was known until our official corporate name change to Tompkins Community Action in 1999, began as a local coalition of concerned community members who wanted to improve the lives of low income families in Tompkins County. Formally incorporated in 1966, the Agency became part of a National and State network of Community Action Agencies. Growing from a small not-for-profit with a budget of \$25,000 and a staff of 3.5 employees in 1966, EOC transformed and grew into Tompkins Community Action, a large, multi-faceted community action agency implementing and integrating 19 programs that serve low-income individuals, families and community collaborations. As one of Tompkins County’s larger employers, the agency currently has a staff of 104 people who annually assist approximately 6,000 individuals with low incomes through our programs. We entered this year with renewed commitment to our mission, vision, and strategies for ending cycles of poverty in Tompkins County.

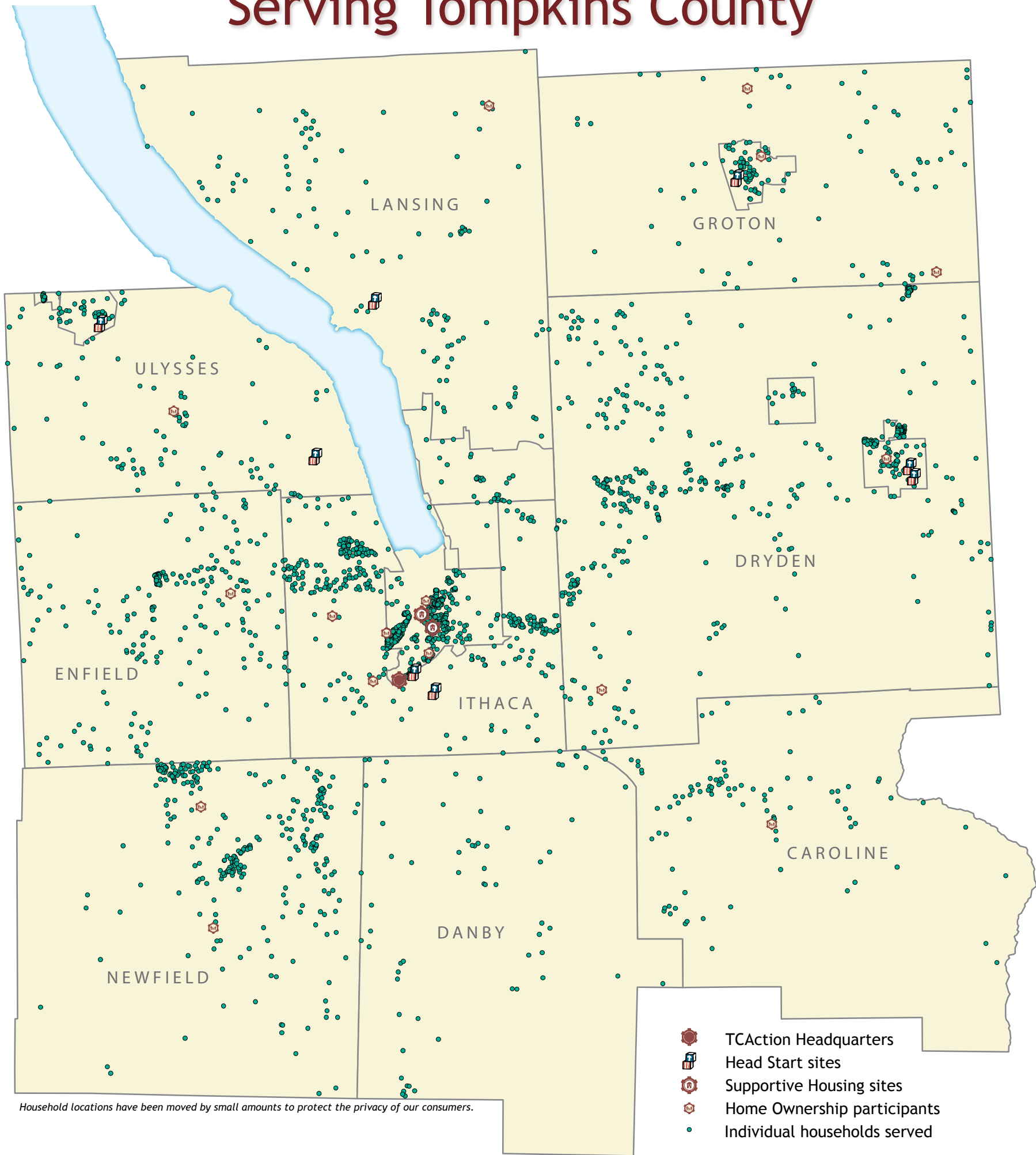


The Economic Opportunity Act defined CAA Boards to include all community members and mandated that boards of directors be tripartite in composition: one third each of public officials, private sector and low-income representatives. At the time, it was considered a “community revolution” to mandate representation by all community stakeholders. This mandate provided the structure for low-income voices to form their vision of their future. Board members are volunteers and nationally over 20,000 CAA board members ensure local control of agency initiatives, finances and community involvement. Additionally, in 1995, TCAction established an Advisory Board to facilitate the development of initiatives and provide operational expertise. When Head Start program guidelines were defined in 1965, they included the formation of a Policy Council, again ensuring that low-income participants were provided with opportunities to voice their vision. Policy Council is comprised of past and current Head Start parents and community members who have an interest or expertise in early childhood education and family development. Policy Council and the TCAction Board of Ditectors have liaisons to each other ensuring communication, coordinated efforts and shared expertise.

## Revenues and Expenditures 2017



# Tompkins Community Action: Serving Tompkins County



## Caroline

Energy Services:  
16 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
40 households  
Family Self-Sufficiency:  
5 households  
Food Pantry:  
87 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
3 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
1 child and their family  
Home Ownership:  
1 household

## Danby

Energy Services:  
12 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
19 households  
Family Self-Sufficiency:  
3 households  
Food Pantry:  
59 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
3 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
1 child and their family

## Dryden

Energy Services:  
94 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
197 households  
Family Self-Sufficiency:  
6 households  
Food Pantry:  
469 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
57 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
37 children and their families  
Home Ownership:  
2 households

## Enfield

Energy Services:  
28 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
74 households  
Family Self-Sufficiency:  
3 households  
Food Pantry:  
180 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
17 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
7 children and their families  
Home Ownership:  
1 household

## Groton

Energy Services:  
21 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
43 households  
Food Pantry:  
47 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
33 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
11 children and their families  
Home Ownership:  
3 households

## Ithaca (town and city)

Energy Services:  
68 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
507 households  
Family Self-Sufficiency:  
55 households  
Food Pantry:  
695 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
117 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
9 children and their families  
Home Ownership:  
5 households  
Supportive Housing:  
33 households

## Lansing

Energy Services:  
19 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
47 households  
Family Self-Sufficiency:  
5 households  
Food Pantry:  
149 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
16 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
10 children and their families  
Home Ownership:  
1 household

## Newfield

Energy Services:  
59 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
102 households  
Family Self-Sufficiency:  
5 households  
Food Pantry:  
276 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
8 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
2 children and their families  
Home Ownership:  
2 households  
Supportive Housing:  
2 households

## Ulysses

Energy Services:  
27 households  
Housing Choice Voucher Program:  
37 households  
Food Pantry:  
96 visits  
Head Start / Early Head Start:  
24 children and their families  
Primary School Support:  
9 children and their families  
Home Ownership:  
1 household

30 households who received their initial Housing Choice Voucher in Tompkins County utilized the portability feature and ported out of state.

20 households were served in adjoining counties through Empower NY.

16 households were served in adjoining counties through the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Program.

26 households were served in adjoining counties through Green Jobs Green NY audits.

Program counts are for the period of October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015.





# Our Community Partners

• Advocacy Center • Alcohol and Drug Council • Alternatives Federal Credit Union • Area Congregations Together • B & W Restaurant Supply • Better Housing of Tompkins County • Borg Warner Morse TEC • Buttermilk Falls Pediatrics • CAPLAW • Cargill • Catholic Charities • Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services • Cayuga Compost • Child and Adult Care Food Program • Child Development Council • Citizens Bank • City of Ithaca Planning Department • Clarks Shurfine Foods • Collective Impact Initiatives • Community Action Partnership • Community Foundation of Tompkins County • Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County • Cornell University Department of Horticulture • Cornell University Department of Human Ecology • Cornell University Public Service Center • Corporation of National Community Service • Cortland State University • Downtown Ithaca Children’s Center • Dryden Central School District • Family and Children’s Services • Family Reading Partnership • Finger Lakes Community Health • Finger Lakes Independence Center • Finger Lakes ReUse • Food Bank of the Southern Tier • Food Distribution Network • Franziska Racker Centers • Get Your Green Back • Groton Business Association • Groton Central School District • Groton National Bank • Groton Nursing Facility • Groton Public Library • Habitat for Humanity Tompkins and Cortland • Homeless and Housing Task Force • Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County • Ithaca City School District • Ithaca College School of Speech, Language and Pathology • Ithaca Housing Authority • Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services • Ithaca Pregnancy Center • Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency • Ithaca Youth Bureau • Ithaca/Tompkins Continuum of Care • J.B. Smith • Landlord Association of Tompkins County • Lansing Central School District • LawNY • Learning Web • Longview • Manufacturers and Traders Bank • Manufacturers and Traders Bank Foundation • Mental Health Association of Tompkins County • MOMS/Medicaid Obstetrical and Maternal Services • Municipal Drug Policy Committee • National Association for the Education of Young Children • National Community Action Foundation • Natural Leaders Initiative • Newfield Central School District • Northeast Pediatrics • NYS Community Action Association • NYS Council of Non-Profits • NYS Department of Health, HPNAP • NYS Department of State, Division of Community Services • NYS Head Start Association • NYS Homes and Community Renewal • NYS Office of Children and Family Services • NYS Office of Tempoaray and Disability Assistance • NYS Weatherization Directors Association • NYSERDA • Opportunities, Alternative and Resources • Park Foundation • Planned Parenthood of Tompkins County • ReEntry Subcommittee of Tompkins County • Rescue Mission • Rural Housing Coalition • Schickel Architecture • Schickel Construction • Sciencenter • Second Wind Cottages • Solar Tompkins • Soldier On • Souther Tier Aids Program • SPCA Tompkins County • Supportive Housing Network of NYS • Sustainable Tompkins • Syracuse University • Taitem Engineering • Tompkins Cortland Community College • Tompkins County Health Department • Tompkins County Administration • Tompkins County Climate Protection initiative • Tompkins County Department of Social Services • Tompkins County Drug Court • Tompkins County Early Intervention • Tompkins County Family Treatment Court • Tompkins County Mental Health Department • Tompkins County Office for Aging • Tompkins County Planning Dept • Tompkins County Probation • Tompkins County Public Library • Tompkins County Solid Waste • Tompkins County Youth Services • Tompkins Seneca Tioga BOCES • Tompkins Trust Company • Unitarian Church • United Way of Tompkins County • US Department of Agriculture • US Department of Energy • US Department of Health and Human Services • US Department of Housing and Urban Development • US Office of Community Services • Village at Ithaca • Village of Groton • WalMart • Wegmans • Wilson Dental • Wipfli • Women, Infants and Children • WorkForce Investment Board •

*an active community can produce powerful change*

*Thank You*