

---

# Tompkins Community Action

---

*an active community can produce powerful change*



---

## Annual Report 2021-2022

---



*TCAction program delivery is administered through three Departments: Family Services, Community 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 19 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 29%; reflecting their abilities to problem solve, plan, and expand their initiative. Language and literacy skills increased by 30% and physical development skills scores increased by 27%. Social skills increased by 29%. Children's math and science skills increased by 31%; 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 visits to school cafeterias, libraries, and gymnasiums. Our Primary School Family 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 80,431 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 2,731 books and activities to family homes funded through RIF and the Park Foundation. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services program funding totaled \$3,915,504. Of which \$2,785,868 supported wages and fringe benefits, \$742,996 for operations, \$254,274 in contracted services and \$70,786 for consumables. An additional \$61,580 of funding expanded staff and parent education and training.

---

Under Community Services, our Emergency Food Panty Program offers households three to four days' worth of food and personal care items available on a bi-weekly basis. Consumers can use the online ordering system to choose foods that best serve their family's dietary needs and preferences as well as schedule a pickup time. Our pantry is a collaboration with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, Cornell University, local producers, businesses, and community member donations. Our Food Pantry regularly offers fresh vegetables, fruits and locally made breads. We served 502 households throughout the year.



The Victory Garden Project held in May provided 150 households with starter vegetable and herb plants including tomatoes, peppers, basil, and cilantro. Since 2010, Cornell University Horticulture Department has provided a beautiful selection of plants that are given out so that gardens can be planted at home. Volunteers from Cargill helped with setting up, packing plants, and loading cars making the event a success. We are thankful for the participants who donate some of the fresh vegetables to the pantry.

---

In Housing Services, we provided Housing Choice Voucher Program rental assistance to 1149 households; this resulted in \$8,847,707.00 in rental subsidy to local landlords issued by NYS Homes & Community Renewal.

Eighty-nine households participated in the Family Self Sufficiency Program (FSS), of which 35 FSS participants developed savings accounts because of an increase in earned income. Two households purchased a home as part of our Homeownership Program, which allows eligible households to transition their rental assistance into mortgage assistance.



We assisted 41 households experiencing homelessness to secure and stabilize in rental housing through the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program and the Solutions to End Homelessness Program.

TCAction Supportive Housing Programs serve people experiencing homelessness by providing permanent housing with rental assistance and supportive services. Our service delivery focuses on supporting residents with building life and housing stability skills, securing and maintaining employment, furthering education, and other resident-identified goals.

Our Supportive Housing Programs are in the City of Ithaca. Chartwell House serves 12 residents in a single room occupancy (SRO) setting. Magnolia House serves 14 residents in studio apartments. Amici House and Corn Street Apartments provides 29 apartments serving young adults 18 to 25 years old.

All residents with children are connected to Early Head Start/Head Start programming. Our newest program location, Ithaca Arthaus, opened in November 2021. In partnership with the Vecino Group, we provide supportive services to 40 units serving young adults in that building. The goal of our Supportive Housing Program is to help remove barriers to resources and prevent a return to homelessness.

# 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.

---

## Economic Opportunity Act

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.

## Implement the Vision

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.

## **Bridge to the Community**

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 TCAction works in partnership with Tompkins County organizations and institutions; leveraging resources, coordinating referrals, and actively participating in the community to reach low-income residents.

## **Measuring Outcomes**

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.

## **Advocacy**

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 History**

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 14 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 105 people who annually assist approximately 5,000 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.



*An EOC Head  
Start classroom  
circa 1983*

## **Governance**

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, TCAAction 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 TCAAction Board of Directors have liaisons to each other ensuring communication, coordinated efforts and shared expertise.

Coming in 2024...

# Asteri



SOUTHWEST AERIAL PERSPECTIVE



NORTHWEST AERIAL PERSPECTIVE



SOUTHWEST STREET PERSPECTIVE



SOUTHEAST STREET PERSPECTIVE



# Tompkins Community Action Serving Tompkins County



## Households served by municipality:

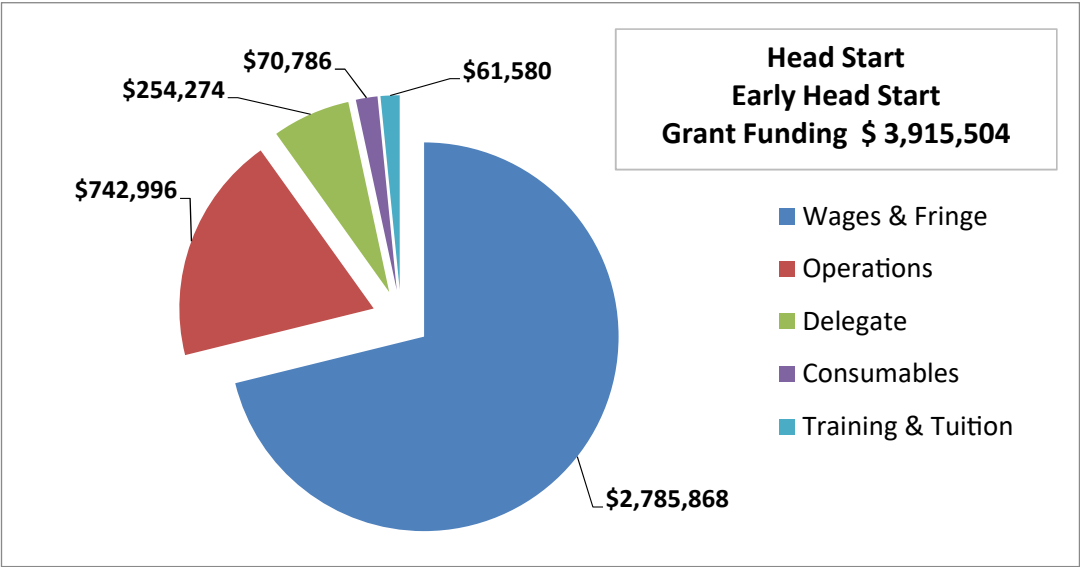
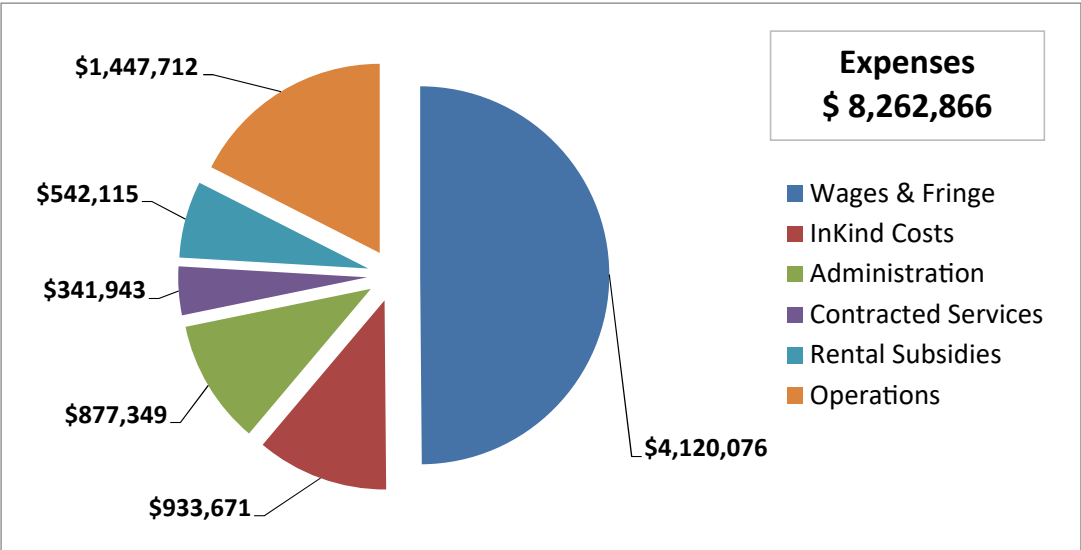
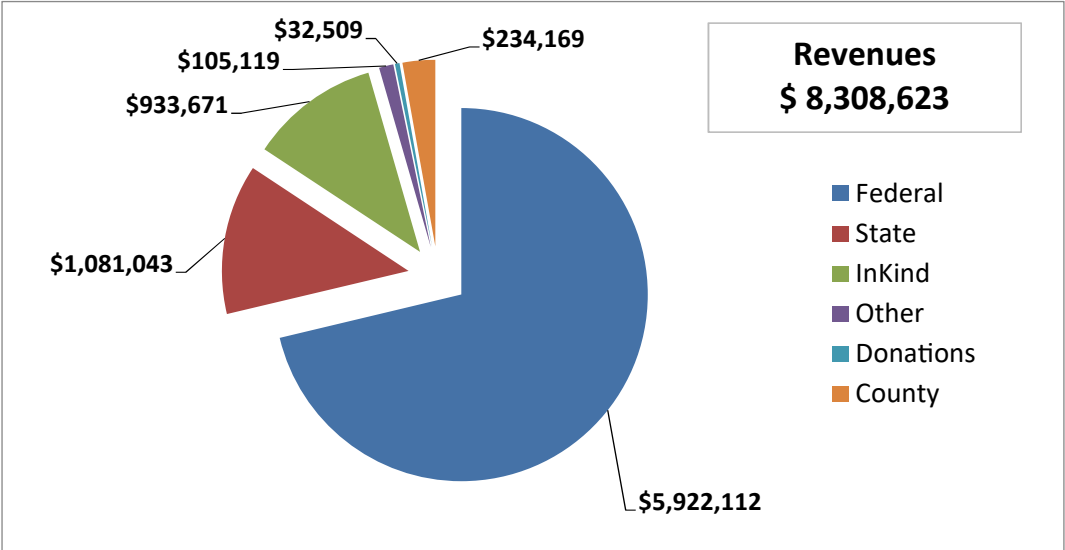
City of Ithaca: 423  
 Town of Caroline: 44  
 Town of Danby: 25  
 Town of Dryden: 257, including 56 in the Village of Dryden  
 and 11 in the Village of Freeville  
 Town of Enfield: 80  
 Town of Groton: 60, including 41 in the Village of Groton  
 Town of Ithaca: 218, including 2 in the Village of Cayuga Heights  
 Town of Lansing: 79, including 22 in the Village of Lansing  
 Town of Newfield: 148  
 Town of Ulysses: 39, including 20 in the Village of Trumansburg

- 📍 TCA Action Headquarters
- 🏠 Head Start sites
- 🏠 Supportive Housing sites
- 🏠 Home Ownership participants
- Individual households served





# Revenues & Expenditures for 2021-2022



# Our Community Partners

• Advocacy Center of Tompkins County • Alcohol and Drug Council • Alternatives Federal Credit Union • B & W Restaurant Supply • Borg Warner Morse TEC • Buttermilk Falls Pediatrics • CAPLAW • Cargill • Catholic Charities • Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services • Child and Adult Care Food Program • Child Development Council • Children's Reading Connection • City of Ithaca • Clarks Shur Fine Foods • Collaborative Solution Network • Collective Impact Initiatives • Community Action Partnership • Community Dispute Resolution Center • Community Foundation of Tompkins County • Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County • Cornell University • Corporation of National Community Service • Cortland State University • Dryden Central School District • Family and Children's Services • Finger Lakes Community Health • Finger Lakes Independence Center • Finger Lakes ReUse • Food Bank of the Southern Tier • Food Distribution Network • Racker • Get Your Green Back Tompkins • Groton Business Association • Groton Central School District • Groton National Bank • Groton Nursing Facility • Groton Public Library • Habitat for Humanity Tompkins and Cortland • Home Depot • Homeless and Housing Task Force • Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County • Ithaca City School District • Ithaca City Treatment Court • Ithaca College School of Music • 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 • Legacy Foundation of Tompkins Trust Company • Lion's Club of Ithaca • Longview, Ithacare community • Lowes • Manufacturers and Traders Bank • Manufacturers and Traders Bank Foundation • Mental Health Association of Tompkins County • MOMS/Medicaid Obstetrical and Maternal Services • National Association for the Education of Young Children • National Community Action Foundation • National Head Start Association • 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 Temporary and Disability Assistance • NYS Weatherization Directors Association • NYSEERDA • Opportunities, Alternative and Resources • Park Foundation • Planned Parenthood of Tompkins County • REACH Medical • Reading is Fundamental (RIF) • Rural Housing Coalition • Schickel Architecture • Schickel Construction • Sciencenter • Second Wind Cottages • SewGreen • Soldier On • Southern Tier Aids Program • Southern Tier Independence Center • SPCA Tompkins County • SUNY Cortland • Supportive Housing Network of NYS • Sustainable Tompkins • St. John's Community Services • Syracuse University • T. G. Miller • 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 • Tompkins Workforce • Trumansburg Central School • Ultimate Reentry Opportunity • 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 Dryden • Village of Groton • Wal-Mart • Wegmans • Welliver • Wipfli • Women, Infants and Children • Women's Opportunity Center • Workforce Investment Board

an active community can produce powerful change!

*Thank You*

---



**56**  
*years*

---

# Tompkins Community Action

---

Main Office  
701 Spencer Road  
Ithaca, New York 14850

**tcaction.org**

Phone: 607-273-8816  
Fax: 607-273-3293