

**Community
Action
Committee *of*
Danbury**
& Northwestern Connecticut



**THE COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE OF DANBURY, INC.
CACD**

**2008 CSBG Community Action Plan
June 2009**

A. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Assessment of area needs

The slowdown in the US economy and the ensuing recession have affected the low income population more than any other segment of the nation's population. The same holds true for the low income population that reside in CACD's 19 town service delivery area. The CSBG enhancement funds will help to mitigate some of the problems caused by the recession. CACD has submitted three initiatives that it plans to enact based on the approval of the funding level that has been conveyed to the CT Department of Social Services. The three initiatives that were submitted to the Department of Social Services include employment, housing and fatherhood programs.

Danbury will be featured in this report because it has the highest population among CACD's service delivery area, the largest number of people living below the federal poverty level and the most diverse population base. A new community needs' assessment (known as the Community Report Card) was recently published for the Housatonic Valley Region. It was a collaboration among the United Way of Western Connecticut, Danbury Hospital and Western Connecticut State University. The report card focuses on the following areas:

- Economic stability
- Education
- Health status
- Risk factors
- Health and lifestyle behaviors
- Diseases

The report card includes a compilation of data for the ten towns that comprise the Housatonic Valley Region. These towns include Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, and Sherman; all of these towns are located within CACD's 19 town service delivery area. Their combined 2007 population was estimated to be 222,188. Eight of the ten towns comprise the Greater Danbury Area that accounts for 87% of the population within CACD's service delivery area.

The Housatonic Valley Region is much more ethnically diverse than in the past. The African-American population increased from 5,538 to 6,527 between 1990 and 2000, and 78% of their population lives in Danbury. The Hispanic population more than doubled in the same period, growing from 6,629 to 15,228; this does not include the estimated 15,000 undocumented Hispanics in Danbury. Danbury's Hispanic population is very diverse on a country of origin basis; Puerto Rican immigrants account for the largest Hispanic population share followed by people from Ecuador, the Dominican

Republic and Mexico. Among Hispanics and Latinos, Brazilians account for the largest population. The region also has a large population of Irish, Italian, German and Polish ancestry.

The Community Report Card needs' assessment measured performance information for 37 variables. Western Connecticut State University's primary role was to compile the data, write the report and post it on several Websites. This first report will establish a baseline from which future studies and results can be compared; the comparisons will reveal where progress has been made, where there is stability in some of the variables and where progress has deteriorated. The major areas of the study include:

- Access to health insurance
- Child abuse
- Diseases
- Education
- Emergency Room Visits
- Health and Lifestyle
- Mental Health
- Poverty
- Pregnancy
- Suicide

The heavy weighting towards health issues relates to the participation of Danbury Hospital in the Report Card study. Nevertheless, the information about health insurance, education and poverty will be very helpful to CACD as it assesses future needs of the low-income individuals and families within its service delivery areas and develops new programs or expands existing programs to meet these needs.

Median Income, 2007

The Community Report Card study shows that Danbury had the greatest number of families living below the poverty level in 2008 among the ten cities profiled in the study; its poverty rate was 5.9%, or 1,079 families, compared to the Connecticut average of 5.6%. Among people 65 and older, the number of people living below the poverty level was 638 or 8.3%. The City's median income was \$53,664 yielding an affordable housing level of \$178,880 based on the federal standard for calculating the affordable housing value.

In Danbury, condominiums most likely account for the largest volume of affordable housing based on the calculated dollar level using federal standards. Very few single family houses are available in that price range and those that fall into this category are likely to be barely inhabitable. Lack of affordable housing has always been considered as Danbury's greatest need. The other nine towns comprising the Housatonic Valley Region are well

above the State of Connecticut's median income. However, the higher median income of the other nine towns may be absorbed by the region's higher cost of living.

The duration of the recession will impact the demand for CACD's services. Record client levels occurred most recently in the Energy Assistance program as well as annual demand for free food dispensed at the Food Pantry. Many of them sought assistance for the first time; many of these first time clients lost jobs or experienced salary reductions. This accelerated in the fourth quarter of 2008.

The following table shows the average 2007 median household income for the ten towns within the study region as well as the Connecticut and US averages for the same period:

HOUSATONIC VALLEY REGION	
Town	Average Median Income, 2007
Bethel	\$84,641
Bridgewater	\$100,881
Brookfield	\$99,196
Danbury	\$65,161
New Fairfield	\$104,845
New Milford	\$81,618
Newtown	\$110,346
Redding	\$128,870
Ridgefield	\$134,367
Sherman	\$95,248
Connecticut	\$65,496
United States	\$50,007

Danbury, the largest city in the Housatonic Valley Region as well as within CACD's 19 town service delivery area has the lowest median income among the towns included in the study. Its median income is slightly below the Connecticut's median income for the same period. When data from the 2010 Census is available, the information in the following table will be updated. Nevertheless, the area data from the 2000 Census provides an excellent profile of the number of families and people who are 65 and older that live below the federal poverty level in the region.

Economic Characteristics, 2000 Census

Town	Median Household Income in 1999 (\$)	Families Below the Federal Poverty Level		Persons Aged 65 and Older Below the Poverty Level	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Bethel	\$68,891	56	1.20	97	5.50
Bridgewater	\$80,420	12	2.30	2	0.80
Brookfield	\$82,706	52	1.20	39	2.30
Danbury	\$53,664	1,079	5.90	638	8.30
New Fairfield	\$84,375	38	1.00	57	1.70
New Milford	\$90,193	154	2.40	131	5.50
Newtown	\$90,193	151	2.20	77	3.90
Redding	\$104,137	29	1.20	31	3.50
Ridgefield	\$107,351	87	1.30	128	5.30
Sherman	\$76,202	28	2.60	30	5.90
Connecticut	\$53,935	49,983	5.60	30,818	7.00
United States	\$41,994	6,620,945	9.20	3,287,774	9.90

Employment/Unemployment

Danbury is considered one of the state's labor market areas. The Danbury labor market includes the following seven towns: Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford and Sherman. The Danbury labor market area has been considered one of the state's more vibrant employment areas in the past, marked by low unemployment rates. On the other hand, the area has been affected by the sub-prime mortgage crisis and the deterioration in the economy's performance.

Unemployment for the seven town Danbury labor market is shown in the following table showing unemployment statistics by town for January and December 2008.

Danbury Labor Market Unemployment Statistics				
Town	Jan. 2008, %	Dec. 2008, %	Avg. 2008, %	May 2009, %
Bethel	3.9	5.2	4.3	6.7
Bridgewater	4.0	3.7	3.7	6.2
Brookfield	4.2	5.0	4.5	6.7
Danbury	4.7	5.4	4.7	7.0
New Fairfield	3.8	4.9	4.3	6.6
New Milford	4.3	5.6	4.5	6.8
Sherman	3.6	3.6	3.6	5.6
Danbury LMA	4.4	5.1	4.5	6.8

According to the State Department of Labor, Connecticut has experienced a 54% increase in unemployment claims since January 2008. The unemployment rate in each of the seven towns has increased at least 2 points since the end of December 2008. This has led to a large increase in the

demand for CACD's services particularly in the emergency services programs such as Energy Assistance and the Food Pantry.

2. Assessment of agency needs

CACD's space at 66 North Street is very crowded and the agency is looking either for larger space to accommodate all employees or space that will accommodate some of the staff.

An annual report has been written and awaits the completion of the final printing details that must be completed before publication. Preliminary work has been started on the development of an agency Website but the Website development has lost momentum and needs to be moved forward. Tentative selections have been made for a Website designer and a Web hosting company.

The agency does not have a strategic plan. This was highlighted as a major issue in the recently concluded NIQUA self assessment. A CT child poverty reduction strategic plan was prepared previously but this is not an agency strategic plan but rather a component plan. A meeting of the agency staff and board members is planned to kick off the development of an agency strategic plan.

CACD needs a broader portfolio to reduce its high reliance on the Energy Assistance and early childhood education programs for the majority of its funds. The agency was recently awarded a grant for the RSVP program. This program became available after the American Red Cross decided not to pursue a renewal grant filing for the program. A grant application for the Bank of America's Neighborhood Builder program has recently been submitted. The agency is also a participant with several other agencies in the grant filing for the Homeless and Rapid Rehousing and the REACH programs.

Based on the recent NIQUA self-assessment, CACD needs to mount considerable efforts in each of the following areas in order to improve agency performance. These areas are information technology, finance and budget and planning and community investment were the categories receiving the lowest scores.

Fundraising efforts remain stagnant although three new ideas for events have been proposed. The agency desperately needs to raise funds to supplement grants because funders are strapped by the effects of the recession; as a consequence, some funders have been reducing their philanthropic efforts. As an example the City of Danbury reduced its charitable donations from \$1.2 million in its last fiscal year to \$0.5 million this year. The existing fundraising committee of the board has done almost nothing to develop a fund raising plan in the last three years.

As in the previous CAP plan, a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been prepared. Many items from the previous SWOT analysis have remained the same.

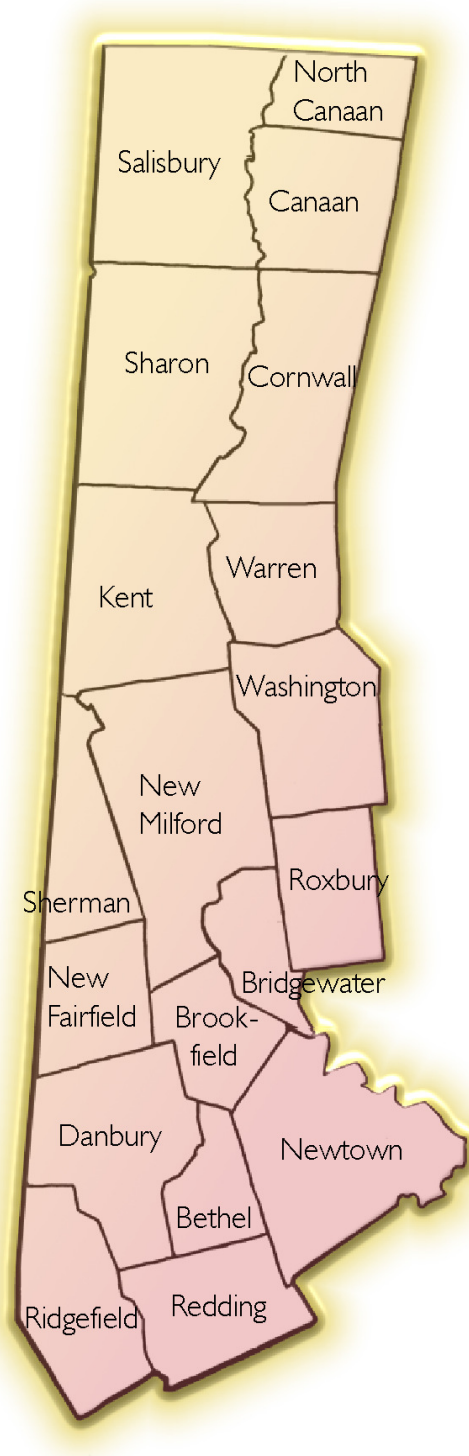
- **STRENGTHS**
 - Longevity in social service programs and name recognition
 - Affiliation with CAFCA and other CAAs
- **WEAKNESSES**
 - High reliance on Energy Assistance and early childcare education programs
 - Little growth in development of new programs and services
 - Lack of a formal and comprehensive fund raising effort
 - Lack of an agency strategic plan
 - Low population of service delivery area
- **OPPORTUNITIES**
 - New or improved collaborative efforts with other social services agencies
 - New program development and enhancement of existing programs through the CSBG stimulus funds
- **THREATS**
 - Consolidation of CAAs
 - Funding reduction by federal, state and local sources

Critical needs in the agency's service delivery area are listed below. Since they remain the same critical issues reported in detail in the 2007 CAP plan, the list of the critical needs are shown but details of each critical need are not included.

CRITICAL NEEDS WITHIN CACD'S SERVICE DELIVERY AREA

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of accessible/affordable health care and health insurance
- Insufficient funds and programs for youth services
- Shortage of early childhood education classrooms
- Undocumented immigrants

B. SERVICE DELIVERY AREA



The Community Action Committee of Danbury's service delivery area encompasses Northwest Fairfield and Litchfield Counties in Connecticut. Most of the population is located in the southern part of the territory.

There are nineteen towns in the service delivery although 89% of the population lives in the eight towns that comprise the Greater Danbury Area (Bethel, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, and Ridgefield).

None of the towns in the northern part of the territory have a population exceeding 10,000. Their population densities are lower than those of the towns in the Greater Danbury Area.

The service delivery area remains stable as those comments were made about it in the 2007 CAP plan. CACD offers the Energy Assistance and Eviction Foreclose Prevention programs in the 19 towns. All other programs are offered to the 8 towns within the greater Danbury area.

1. Access to Services

Clients obtain access to services at CACD's Danbury office, the early childcare center and the sub-delegate agencies: the Association or Religious Communities, Danbury Youth Services, the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury and other social service agencies as well as various Departments of the State of Connecticut. Clients in towns outside the Danbury locations obtain Energy Assistance services through the town social workers or

municipal agents. EFPP clients outside of Danbury come to the Danbury office through referrals from referrals from town social service agencies. The Energy Assistance program is converting from CAPTAIN to FuelWare software for the upcoming season and all intake sites in the service delivery area are being trained to use the new software. There is great enthusiasm by the town social workers and agents to start using FuelWare and this conversion will allow all intake sites

2. How HSI Services and Functions

HSI efforts for CACD's main office, Action Early Learning Center and the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury are coordinated by the HSI liaison. As mentioned earlier, CACD does not provide a universal intake or pre-assessment for the CEAP clients at intake sites outside of Danbury. An HSI integration program waiver has been approved for these clients. Intake workers evaluate the client's needs based on the pre-assessment. If the client has one need, the intake worker refers the client to the appropriate agency or another internal program for services. If there are two or more needs, the client is referred to the case manager for a full assessment and development of a detailed plan to improve the client's self-sufficiency and help bring the client out of poverty. This includes assistance in preparing the proper forms and documentation required by other agencies, including DSS as an example. Energy Assistance universal intake and pre-assessment information was captured in both CAPTAIN and CT FACS, including the action plan, while all other programs used CT FACS to enter data from the universal intake, the pre-assessment, and the action plan. With the adoption of FuelWare, all intake sites will be able to enter data electronically. Synergism with the KeyWare case management software will enable the data entered into FuelWare to be directly transferred into KeyWare.

Several client profile templates were entered into KeyWare for use in the development of action plans. KeyWare has also been adopted by the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury.

3. Human Services Infrastructure

The agency developed a comprehensive human services infrastructure manual for use by all program directors and intake workers and distributed it early this year, consolidating all key aspects of the HSI system into one common information binder that can be used as a reference manual. The manual was distributed to CACD's main office, Action Early Learning Center, and the Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury, the three locations within CACD's service delivery area that are practicing HIS. The major focus of the agency's HIS performance has been the assessment, improvement and reassessment of compliance with the 22 critical points necessary to achieve for HIS compliance. A self-assessment of HIS compliance showed that all components using HIS are in compliance although this has not been verified through a monitoring visit

The switch to user friendly KeyWare case management software has had a major impact on the agency's HIS improvements. Referrals, follow-ups and case closures

have shown a dramatic improvement. Additions to the case management staff have also enhanced the HIS performance improvement objective.

The major focus on HSI is the development of action plans. CACD has lagged in its efforts to implement the action plan aspect of HSI and has embarked on a corrective action program to remedy the situation.

4. 2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free community service administered by the United Way of Connecticut and funded by the Connecticut Department of Social Services and local United Ways. **2-1-1** provides information and help in crisis situations.

As in the past, information about CACD programs has been updated in 2-1-1. All personnel are aware of 2-1-1 and use it when necessary. The agency receives calls from **2-1-1** from people seeking services.

C. IDENTIFYING AND MEETING NEEDS

CACD has reported a significant amount of data from the 2000 Census Report in its previous CAP Plans. However no new data in the categories previously reported has become available except the July 1, 2005 population estimates of the Connecticut towns that fall within CACD's service delivery area whose estimated population total is 244,756. Therefore, CACD has opted not to report the same data reported in its previous two reports from the 2000 Census.

TOWNS WITHIN CACD'S SERVICE DELIVERY AREA Estimated Population as of July 1, 2005	
<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
Bethel	18,760
Bridgewater	1,898
Brookfield	16,354
Canaan	1,101
Cornwall	1,489
Danbury	78,736
Falls Village ¹	
Kent	2,962
New Fairfield	14,261
New Milford	28,667
Newtown	26,996
North Canaan	3,392
Redding	8,646
Ridgefield	24,210
Roxbury	2,327
Salisbury	4,083
Sharon	3,052
Sherman	4,129
Washington	3,693
Total Service Delivery Area Population	244,756

¹ Reported in North Canaan

The southern towns within the service delivery area are the most highly populated and eight of these towns, referred to as the Greater Danbury area, account for 89% of the population of CACD's service delivery area based on the 2005 statistics. These towns are able to access CACD's full line of programs and services while the other towns in the service delivery area receive CEAP and EFPP services.

**GREATER DANBURY AREA
Estimated Population as of July 1, 2005**

<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
Bethel	18,760
Brookfield	16,354
Danbury	78,736
New Fairfield	14,261
New Milford	28,667
Newtown	26,996
Redding	8,648
Ridgefield	24,210
Total Greater Danbury Area	216,630

Primarily in the first half of 2009, agency collaborative efforts have grown. The agency is participating on a multi-year EFPP contract with New Opportunities. Additionally, CACD and three other agencies are participating with New Opportunities on the Homeless and Re-housing grant. The agency will assume the RSVP program from the American Red Cross who decided not to rebid on the grant after 30 years of managing the program. CACD has also applied for a Neighborhood Builder grant with the Bank of America.

CACD made considerable progress in HSI conformance in 2008, in large part attributable to conversion to case management software that is much easier to use than CT FACS. This led to other improvements including paperless entry of intake and pre-assessments for nearly all programs, assessment of HSI conformance based on the 22 points and a much higher level of referrals. Energy Assistance paved the way to make its transition from CAPTAIN to FuelWare smoothly by entering client information in both CAPTAIN and the case management software. The agency also added to its case management staff. Some intake sites used CAPTAIN software to enter data in Energy Assistance; they are now being trained quite extensively in FuelWare. The FuelWare conversion will be implemented shortly in order for it to be used in the upcoming season.

- E.** CACD's outcome measures for 2008 for Community Goals 1 through 6 are shown on the following pages. These goals were included in the CSBG-IS report.