



**SPRINGFIELD  
PARTNERS *for*  
COMMUNITY  
ACTION**

**2019 ANNUAL REPORT**  
HELPING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES.

# Letter from the Executive Director

Dear reader,

**AS WE ENTER A NEW DECADE**, and my twentieth year as executive director of this great organization, I could not help reflecting on all that we have done in our efforts towards “helping people, changing lives.” Springfield Partners has been ahead of the curve especially as it relates to assessing the needs of the communities we serve and creating programs to fit those needs.

Not long ago we petitioned our legislative delegation for funding to assist veterans by helping them transition back into the community. Our legislators rose to the occasion and provided the funding. Recently, we recognized that transportation for veterans and seniors is limited. We successfully sought funding assistance from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation and through the office of Mayor Dominic Sarno. Our most recent needs assessment is trending towards the employment needs, job training, and housing, and we are working towards solutions. I am extremely proud of the programs we have added to our portfolio over the years, and equally proud of the dedication and commitment to the programs by staff.

We serve nearly 10,000 people every year, and although the programs that we provide are extremely helpful,

## MISSION STATEMENT

*To utilize and provide resources that assist people in need to obtain economic stability, ultimately creating a better way of life.*



we are a long way from overcoming matters related to poverty. However, with your help we can overcome them. I am reminded of a quote from a distinguished college president: “Leaders change the world and they do so through service—giving of one’s self to give to others.” Come out and volunteer at one or more of our programs. Or, donate to Springfield Partners for Community Action—\$5, \$10, \$25, \$100—any amount would be helpful.

Lastly, we are living in difficult times. Some of our nation’s most powerful leaders are turning their backs to the poor and to issues of poverty as if the root causes did not exist. I am reminded of a quote from Robert Kennedy. “Every time we turn our heads the other way, when we see the law flouted, when we tolerate what we know to be wrong, when we close our eyes and ears to the corrupt because we are too busy or too frightened, when we fail to speak up and speak out, we strike a blow against freedom, decency and justice.”



**Paul F. Bailey**  
*Executive Director*

# Veterans Services

Springfield Partners for Community Action veterans' program assists veterans and their families connect with resources and services within their surrounding communities. We focus on helping underserved and low-income veterans reach economic self-sufficiency through education, direct assistance and outreach.

We provide support services for veteran families in Springfield and Western Massachusetts. In addition, our program works closely with area veterans' programs and community providers to ensure that any veteran and their families get all the help that they need.

Veterans have earned our gratitude and respect. Our goal is to get veterans and their families connected and included within the community.

Our approach to serving veterans and providing programs has allowed us to become an integral component serving veterans in Western Massachusetts. Our motto is "no door is the wrong door" which means if a veteran comes to our office seeking assistance and it isn't something that we provide directly, we will work with the veteran to research and seek out resources or services that may address their need.



Services we provide include: emergency needs assistance, emergency transportation support, financial literacy and housing education, VA claims assistance, case management, and wraparound services/referrals. We host a weekly luncheon for veterans and have coordinated multiple events throughout the year that featured veteran-focused guest speakers and service providers. At our 5th Annual Stars and Stripes Day, the event had over 60 vendors, live music, and an award ceremony. Veterans in attendance received free food, haircuts, and hygiene kits.

Springfield Partners Transportation program offers weekly demand responsive and shared ride transportation for seniors (55+), disabled persons, and veterans. Transportation has included, but is not limited to, shopping/grocery centers, pharmacies, health and legal appointments, cultural enrichment events, and recreational activities. Ridership has totaled over 150 riders and we have provided 950 plus rides.

***We work to re-engage those who have served in our military by helping them transition within the community.***

# Asset Development



## CREDIT COUNSELING

Counseled **267 customers** working to improve their credit, reduce debt, build and/or establish credit, and prepare to become a homeowner.

## FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOPS

In the most recent fiscal year, **641 customers** completed the Financial Literacy Workshop series. This translates to a total of **5,040 training hours** dedicated to helping customers better understand the world of finances. We assisted **403** customers to be able to maintain a household budget for at least 30 days. Workshops are designed to engage customers in charting their pathway to economic stability through the lens of their personal abilities. We recognize one size does not fit all. Therefore, we have the ability to accommodate customer needs—**no door is the wrong door**. All materials/curriculum are evidence-based and vetted by the FDIC. New sessions begin every month, and consist of four classes each. Workshops are free and open to all low- and moderate-income residents of Springfield.

## LOW-INCOME TAXPAYERS CLINIC (LITC)

The clinic provides educational seminars, one-on-one counseling to individuals, and U.S. Tax Court representation. We have LITC for both federal and state levels.

In 2018, the total number of taxpayers serviced at the state level was 88, the number of Limited English Proficiency Initiative (LEPI) taxpayers serviced (foreign speakers) was 29, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) issues was 35, Circuit Breaker issues was 5, collection issues was 8, and other qualifying issues were 29.

For the five-month period of August 1 through December 31, 2019 the total number of taxpayers serviced was 31, the total number of LEPI taxpayers serviced was 16, both trending well-ahead of the previous year.

*Workshops are designed to engage customers in charting their pathway to economic stability.*

### **VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)**

VITA helps low-moderate income taxpayers identify, file and claim available tax credits that are rightfully theirs. The agency has been the lead organization for VITA in the local area since 2002. What went well with this year's VITA program? We continue to serve many folks who used to get their taxes done at STCC.

*We recognize one size does not fit all ...  
we have the ability to accommodate  
customer needs.*



## **Our numbers tell our story!**

**Clients served:**

**1,713**

**Federal returns prepared:**

**1,688**

**State returns prepared:**

**1,718**

**E-file users:**

**1,514**  
or **90%**

**Total refunds:**

**\$82,725**

**Average refund:**

**\$800**

**Direct deposit refunds:**

**978**

**Total refunds value:**

**\$3,113,760**

**Average refunds value:**

**\$2,137**

**782**

**Earned income tax  
credits (EITC) claimed**

**Total \$ value:**

**\$1,490,740**

**Senior Circuit Breaker  
credits claimed:**

**103**

**520**

**Child tax credits claimed**

**Total \$ value:**

**\$667,697**

**34**

**Volunteers**

**Total volunteer hours:**

**1,021**

**48**

**Education tax  
credits claimed**

**Total \$ value:**

**\$39,871**

# Youth and Family Services

## COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Our Community Scholarship program helps qualified low-income students from Springfield attend colleges or trade schools. The program is unique in that we award scholarships based in part on the applicants' community service and volunteer efforts. In 2019, we gave **13** scholarships of **\$1,000** each.

- ▶ **219 scholarships** were awarded to Springfield residents over the last 17 years for a grand **total of \$215,600**.
- ▶ This program has been operating **since 2003**.
- ▶ It goes to those attending a Massachusetts-accredited school or trade program.
- ▶ It is open to high school students and adult learners.

*Our Community Scholarship program helps qualified low-income students from Springfield attend colleges or trade schools.*

## EARLY EDUCATION & LEARNING CENTER

In May of 2019 New Beginnings was granted a new five-year term of accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children! Our Early Education & Learning Center provides a warm, safe, and affordable early education and care center for children four weeks to six years. In 2019 we cared for **131 children**, of which **20** children passed through our oldest classrooms to develop skills needed in kindergarten. The children in these oldest classrooms utilized the Big Day Curriculum through a grant from the Funder's Collaborative.

### Teaching and Curriculum

We currently use Teaching Strategies GOLD, an assessment and curriculum software in all classrooms.

Through our partnership with the Springfield Public Schools and the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) Grant we were fortunate to receive Big Day Curriculum kits and professional development workshops. Starting in September 2019, all four preschool classrooms now have *Big Day for PreK*, a comprehensive, integrated and engaging curriculum that seamlessly weaves literacy, science, math, and the arts together



with a goal of school readiness. Eight teachers participated in full-day professional development with the curriculum writers.

Through a grant from the Davis Foundation we were again able to get a Massachusetts Reading Corp Tutor from the Literacy Lab. The children in our oldest classroom (those going to Kindergarten next year) have a full time tutor in their classroom that works on literacy through large and small group activities. The tutor measures the children's progress and growth throughout the year.

### Professional Development

In FY19 the staff at New Beginnings completed 584 hours of professional development! This included 12 hours of health and safety trainings required by the Department of Early Education and Care. This also included curriculum trainings for Big Day, Second Step, and our assessment system, Teaching Strategies GOLD.

### Community Relationships

As the designated Community Action agency for the city of Springfield, Springfield Partners for Community Action offers many programs for the families we serve. In addition the Director of Early Education and Care is tasked annually with creating new partnerships with local community organizations.

We currently have arrangements with the following agencies that provide services and support to our children and families:

- ▶ Behavioral Health Network
- ▶ Raising a Reader
- ▶ Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation (Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program)
- ▶ Urban League of Springfield (Foster Grandparent Program)
- ▶ Springfield School Volunteers (Big Day Program)
- ▶ Commonwealth Mobile Oral Health Services
- ▶ Literacy Lab
- ▶ Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (paid for through CPPI Grant)
- ▶ Contract (CPPI Grant) with Springfield Public School

### Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)

New Beginnings was invited to partner with Springfield Public Schools, the lead education agency for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative. Along with Square One and the

## CPPI Grant Breakdown

FY19 (February 2019–June 2019)	\$50,000
FY20 (July 2019–June 2020)	\$92,792*

Both grants included: personnel, tax and fringe, mental health consultant, educational supplies

*\*The grant allowed us to amend our budget in October 2019 to spend out unused funds from FY19 in the amount of \$42,972.00.*

YMCA, we will collectively build upon the goals identified to create a more sustainable infrastructure in Springfield and increase access to high-quality preschool programs for high-need children.

In the New Beginnings CPPI classroom, inclusive practices and services have been embedded within the instructional day. The need to be transported to and from public school has been eliminated for five special needs children with Individual Education Plans. Through our work, the children are able to stay in our care all day. Their needs are met by having their services—speech and occupational therapy—come to them. This leads to less transition for kids and better outcomes.

A large part of the grant also focuses on professional development and coaching. A certified special needs teacher from Springfield Public Schools is in the classroom daily to co-teach with our staff. They also have a coach that comes in to model and plan with them. Through the grant we have been able to send our staff from the CPPI and other classrooms to various trainings led by Springfield Public Schools including Second Step Curriculum and two free kits, Board Maker software and training, and Big Day Training and two curriculum kits.

Another grant bonus was our ability to hire a mental health consultant to work with the CPPI classroom. Our consultant supports staff by mentoring, coaching and guiding them in their work with children with individual needs. She has also been a huge help to the administration assisting with the revamp of our intake procedures to ensure better placements for children. She attends staff meetings to work with staff by giving them ideas and support around working with children with behavioral and other needs. In addition, the classroom received a Smart Board for instructional use with the children.

**By the numbers!** **137** Total children cared for  
Total children "graduated" to kindergarten: **24**

# Housing and Energy Services



## EMERGENCY FUEL FUNDING

During the most recent fiscal year we successfully implemented and completed the Emergency Fuel Funds in partnership with the Attorney General's Office. We received 332 applications to assist Hampden County residents struggling to maintain heat in their homes. We approved 149 residents with an average payable between \$500 and \$1,000. Total spent was \$100,000.

## HUD-CERTIFIED HOUSING COUNSELING

- ▶ Maintained HUD certification, good through 2022.
- ▶ Housing counselors are on track to successfully complete individual HUD certification.
- ▶ Maintained CHAPA (Citizen's Housing and Planning Association) seal of approval, good through 12/2020.
- ▶ The value-added benefit of dual certifications allows our customers to qualify for special mortgage programs that require these certifications.
- ▶ First-time home buyers workshops are held quarterly in January, April, July and September, and include Spanish language sessions.
- ▶ 168 clients graduated and were awarded certificates of completion through First Time Home Buyers education.
- ▶ 129 participated in ongoing housing counseling assistance.

- ▶ 26 clients successfully purchased their first homes for an average purchase price of \$155,000 per residence, averaging almost \$4 million of investments put back into the local economy and adding to the tax base of the city.

## EVICTIION CLINIC

The Eviction Clinic provides counseling, mediation and advice to customers at risk of becoming homeless due to eviction. In the last fiscal year, the counselor assisted **160 households** at risk of losing their home. The same number of customers were educated on their rights and responsibilities as a tenant and were provided copies of our Housing Etiquette guide.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION (WEATHERIZATION) ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We helped residents of Hampden County save on their utility bills by making their homes more energy-efficient. In 2019, we weatherized or repaired **2,555 homes**:

- ▶ 1,260 households with improved energy efficiency and/or energy burden reduction in their homes.
- ▶ 113 households who experienced improved health and safety due to improvements within their home—reduction or elimination of lead, radon, carbon dioxide and/or fire hazards or electrical issues, etc.
- ▶ 756 home repairs—structural, appliance, heating systems, etc., and including emergency home repairs.
- ▶ 313 energy efficiency improvements—insulation, air sealing, furnace repair, etc.

Helping elderly residents to age in place is a top priority of our Energy Conservation/Weatherization program. Available services could include replacement of refrigerators, freezers, and window air conditioning units with energy-efficient models; installation of LED light bulbs; air sealing to lessen heat loss through convection; and insulating attics and exterior walls.

*Helping elderly residents to age in place is a top priority ...*

# Financials

For the year ended September 30, 2019 with comparative totals for the year ended September 30, 2018.

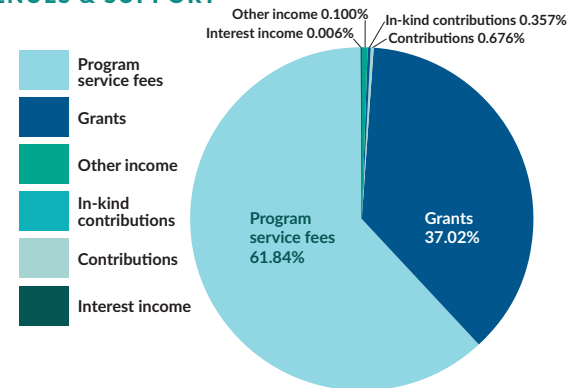
## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

			2019	2018
	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL	TOTAL
<b>Revenues &amp; support</b>				
Program service fees	\$3,385,428	—	\$3,385,428	\$2,592,072
Grants	2,026,702	—	2,026,702	1,833,402
Contributions	36,982	—	36,982	15,402
In-kind contributions	19,525	—	19,525	16,077
Interest income	304	91	395	276
Other income	5,475	—	5,475	33,456
Total revenues & support	5,474,416	91	5,474,507	4,490,685
<b>Expenses</b>				
Program	4,962,549	—	4,962,549	4,043,140
Administration	397,619	—	397,619	394,874
Fundraising	9,091	—	9,091	10,910
Total expenses	5,369,259	—	5,369,259	4,448,924
Changes in net assets	105,157	91	105,248	41,761
Net assets, beginning of year	1,022,728	26,753	1,049,481	1,007,720
Net assets, end of year	\$1,127,885	\$26,844	\$1,154,729	\$1,049,481

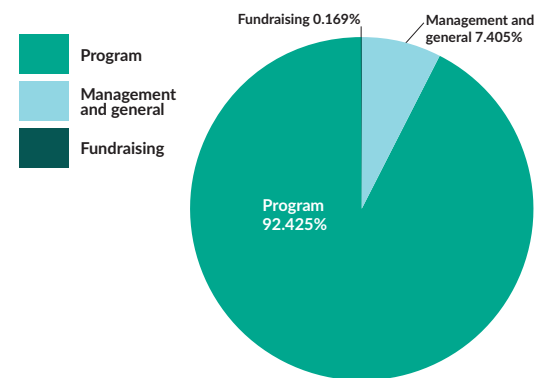
## STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

				2019	2018
	PROGRAM	MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL	FUNDRAISING	TOTAL	TOTAL
<b>Salaries &amp; related expenses</b>					
Salaries	\$1,628,570	\$244,307	\$6,025	\$2,240,098	\$1,687,068
Payroll taxes	210,548	22,826	998	90,617	210,619
Fringe benefits	193,551	33,269	625	74,269	216,996
Total salaries & related expenses	2,032,669	300,402	7,648	2,340,719	2,114,683
<b>Other expenses</b>					
Contractors and materials	2,240,098	—	—	2,240,098	1,716,469
Deprecation	76,572	13,862	183	90,617	85,225
Food	74,269	—	—	74,269	64,368
Interest	24,551	—	—	24,551	26,058
Legal and accounting	—	33,500	—	33,500	44,134
Occupancy	92,183	17,989	917	11,089	127,211
Outside services	60,058	—	—	60,058	28,992
Program materials	245,193	—	—	245,193	103,494
Staff training	30,169	4,454	—	34,623	27,034
Supplies	55,660	26,665	343	82,668	83,055
Vehicle expenses	31,127	747	—	31,874	28,201
	2,929,880	97,217	1,443	3,028,540	2,334,241
Total expenses	\$4,962,549	\$397,619	\$9,091	\$5,369,259	\$4,448,924

## REVENUES & SUPPORT



## EXPENSES





# SPRINGFIELD PARTNERS *for* COMMUNITY ACTION

HELPING PEOPLE.  
CHANGING LIVES.

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