

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

HELPING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES.

A young girl with dark hair and a green dinosaur mask sits at a desk with a laptop and markers.

**SPRINGFIELD
PARTNERS *for*
COMMUNITY
ACTION**

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear reader,

Last year as I composed my message to readers of the Springfield Partners for Community Action's annual report, I could not have imagined what was lurking just around the corner: a world-wide pandemic. COVID-19 quickly affected so many lives in so many ways and forced us to close our doors for nearly four months, although we continued working remotely. We quickly realized that many of our then-current plans were out the window and that we needed to adjust and focus on the immediate needs of the thousands of area residents who were affected by the pandemic.

Thanks to legislation from Congress that put in place the Cares Act of 2020 and subsequent funding to assist those in need, as well as funding from the Massachusetts Community Action Network and from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, we have been able to distribute thousands of dollars in food vouchers to members of our community. As well, we are assisting households with utility, rent and mortgage

payments. Like many cities and towns across America, our area was hit hard with death and loss of gainful employment as a result of the pandemic. We are slowly getting back to our mission and goals, but will continue to work and fight hard to assist our residents in need.

Paul F. Bailey
Executive Director



MISSION STATEMENT

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

New Initiative



COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM

When the pandemic hit in March, some urgent needs surfaced in our Springfield community. Lockdown mandates disrupted school and work schedules, cash flow and support services. Most people with low to moderate incomes work, but they don't have money set aside for emergencies. Therefore, we created an Emergency Response Program to provide essential services, mainly for food and shelter.

We provided rent payments to 10 households, mortgage payments to two households, utility payments to 57 households, new hot water heaters to three households, and \$200 food cards to 261 households.

In addition, Board Vice-President Seneida Torres initiated our partnership with the We Care Initiative Program to deliver care packages to underserved areas of the community.

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Asset Development

CREDIT COUNSELING AND FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOPS

Living paycheck to paycheck and constantly worrying about bill collectors is extremely stressful. We help our customers develop budgets, advise on managing money and debts and offer free educational materials. Our counselors are certified and trained in consumer credit, budgeting, and money and debt management. **Financial Literacy Workshops** are designed to engage customers in charting their pathway to economic stability through the lens of their personal abilities. All materials and 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.

In FY2020, 87 customers completed the Financial Literacy Workshop series: a total of **1,044 training hours** dedicated to helping customers better understand the world of finances. We also **helped 62 customers** improve their credit scores, while **90 individuals** reported improved financial well-being.

The primary negative effect of the pandemic for these programs was to curtail our outreach in the community. Before the pandemic, that outreach consisted of classes in the shelters, community outreach, attendance at community events and so forth. Virtual operations, while convenient for many, limit our access to some of our neediest citizens.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)

Our agency has been the lead organization for VITA in the local area since 2002. VITA offers free state and federal income tax preparation to low- and moderate-income residents, ensuring that they claim all available tax credits. In FY2020, **we trained 46 volunteers**, among them students from area colleges and universities, retirees and community residents. VITA has maintained a collaborative partnership with local colleges and universities including Western New England University, Bay Path University and Springfield Technical Community College as referrals for both volunteers, taxpayers and training facilities. During the 2019 tax season, **volunteers prepared 3,260 federal and state returns** and saved customers hundreds of thousands of dollars in filing fees. Our **customers claimed over \$3.5 million in refunds**, generating increased economic impact for the local economy.

LOW-INCOME TAXPAYERS CLINIC (LITC)

Springfield Partners for Community Action is currently funded by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to provide educational seminars, one-on-one counseling, Tax Court representation, controversy negotiation, and prior years' tax return preparation and filing to the Limited English Proficiency Initiative (LEPI), disability and low- to moderate-income communities. We are the only Low Income Taxpayer Clinic in Western Massachusetts. In FY2020 **we helped over 170 customers** who received notices from the IRS or DOR. As a result, **114 customers increased their net worth**. Aggregated savings on controversy cases was over \$100,000.



NHS

Comprehensive High School
Chicopee, Massachusetts

Youth and Family Services

COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Operating since 2003, our Community Scholarship program helps qualified low-income students from Springfield attend colleges or trade schools. Over **200 scholarships totaling \$228,600** have been awarded to Springfield residents over the past 18 years.

This program awards scholarships based in part on the applicants' community service and volunteer efforts, and is open to non-traditional students. In 2020, we gave **13 scholarships of \$1,000 each**.

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Springfield Partners Early Learning Center, New Beginnings, provides a warm, responsive, caring, safe and culturally diverse atmosphere for children four weeks to five years and their families. In FY2020 we cared for **82 children, 25 of whom graduated** from our preschool July 2 in a special pandemic-friendly drive by/parade graduation ceremony.

We closed March 17 due to COVID-19, and reopened on July 6. Our capacity prior to the closure was 107; when we reopened we had a capacity of 78. In September, we were able to go back to pre-COVID numbers, and we opened a school-age program to take in 22 remote learners. **Our new capacity is now 122.**

Since the closure we have been using an app called Class Dojo to keep in touch with parents and let them "see" what is happening in the classrooms since they can't be there. Teachers send messages to parents and post pictures of the children throughout the day. We also created a Facebook group for them. We will continue to use virtual environments to host parent meetings and events.



We hired a family engagement and outreach coordinator to be a liaison between parents and the classroom teachers, the public school (for children with special needs), and other agencies. The coordinator makes referrals for parents and helps them get needed resources for the whole family, not just the child. Screenings with the family at enrollment help determine if there are needs beyond child care, and we then make the appropriate connections.

We have been part of the CPPI (Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative) grant for three years. A Springfield public school teacher comes to our building every day and co-teaches children who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In September we had to come up with a new plan, since the public school teachers were not allowed to be on site. We used technology to make it happen. We have five iPads in the classroom, supplied by the public school. Children participate in small-group and one-on-one sessions with their public school teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc., via the iPads. We also have large group instruction with the public school teacher leading the group over Zoom, which we put up on the smart board in the classroom. The coaches and staff meet virtually over Zoom weekly to plan curriculum together.

Housing and Energy Services



EMERGENCY FUEL FUND

Every day, many people in our community must choose between paying utilities or covering other essential needs. During FY2020 we partnered with the Attorney General's Office to disburse funds to households struggling to pay their gas bills. We **assisted 60 customers with payouts between \$500 and \$1,000**, thus preventing many shutoffs.

HUD-CERTIFIED HOUSING COUNSELING

Springfield Partners' Housing Counseling program is currently certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and approved by the Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), allowing customers to qualify for lower-rate mortgage programs.

During FY2020 the program conducted bilingual (Spanish/English) first-time home buyers workshops in January, April, July and September. One hundred sixty-eight (168)

customers completed the eight-hour program, while 147 customers received ongoing housing counseling assistance. Of those, **51 customers successfully purchased their first homes**. At an average price of \$205,000, **nearly \$10.5 million was invested into the local economy**, and **over \$200,000 was realized by the city in property taxes**.

EVICTIION CLINIC

The Eviction Clinic provides counseling, mediation and advice to customers at risk of becoming homeless due to eviction. In FY2020, the counselor helped **85 households** avoid eviction, and helped **76 families** maintain safe and affordable housing for at least 90 days. These customers were educated on their rights and responsibilities as tenants and were provided copies of our Housing Etiquette guide.

ENERGY CONSERVATION/ WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We help residents of Hampden County save on their utility bills by making their homes more energy-efficient. In FY2020, we **weatherized 226 homes** and installed Energy Savings measures in 800 homes. Overall, **participants saved \$410,000 on utility bills**, an average of \$400 per participant annually. The program spent **\$1.3 million weatherizing homes**—an average of \$4,250 per home. 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 and compact fluorescent lamps; air sealing to lessen heat loss through convection; and insulating attics and exterior walls.

Veterans Services



Our Veterans Program works to re-engage veterans by helping them transition within the community. We identify and address any gaps between existing services and the current needs of our veterans. The services we provide include: case management, financial literacy workshops, education on tenant rights and responsibilities, transportation assistance, food, VA claims assistance and wraparound services/ referrals. In 2020, **over 1,000 services were provided to 215 veterans and their households.**

Transportation



We provide transportation to qualifying area residents: seniors (55+), disabled persons and veterans.

Destinations have included, but are not limited to, shopping/grocery centers, pharmacies, health and legal appointments, cultural enrichment events, and recreational activities. **Over 175 residents took advantage of this service.**

Our Partners



The staff of Springfield Partners for Community Action realizes that we cannot meet the needs of our clients by working alone—the desire to work with others is even in our name!

These are our current affiliations and partnerships to address the unmet needs of our community:

Alden Baptist Church
Alzheimer's Association
Bank of America
Bay Path University
Baystate Health
Berkshire Bank
Caring Health Center
Center for Human Development
Community Action Pioneer Valley
Community Development Block Grant
CHAPA
Citizens Bank
Columbia Gas of Massachusetts

Commonwealth Mobile Oral Health Services
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants
Eversource Electric
Family Services
First Pioneer Valley Dream Center
Freedom Credit Union
Friends of the Homeless
Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation
Holy Trinity Church
Home City Families
Internal Revenue Service
Literacy Lab
Live Well Springfield/PHI

MADCA
Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
MASSCAP
MassDOT
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
NAB-Vets
National Grid
New England Farm Workers
Open Pantry Community Services

PeoplesBank
People's United Bank
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Pittsfield Veterans' Service Department
Preschool Enrichment Team
Raising a Reader Massachusetts
Reading Success by 4th Grade
Soldier On
Springfield Department of Elder Affairs
Springfield Food Policy Council
Springfield Housing Authority
Springfield Mayor's Office Healthy Homes Program
Springfield Office of Housing

Springfield Parent Academy (PACE)
Springfield Public Schools
Springfield School Volunteers
Springfield Veterans Center
Springfield WORKS Square One
St. John's Congregational Church
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
United Way
Urban League of Springfield
Valley Opportunity Council
Vets Inc.
Way Finders
Western New England University

Financials

For the year ended September 30, 2020 with comparative totals for the year ended September 30, 2019.

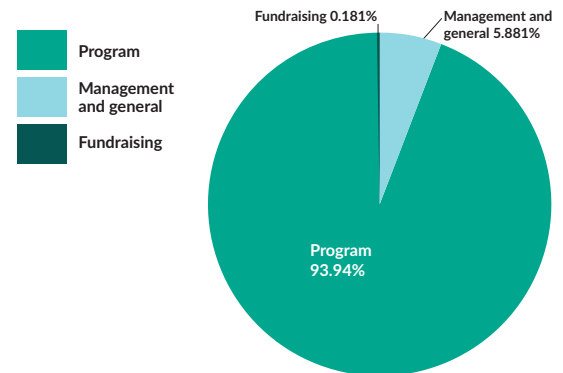
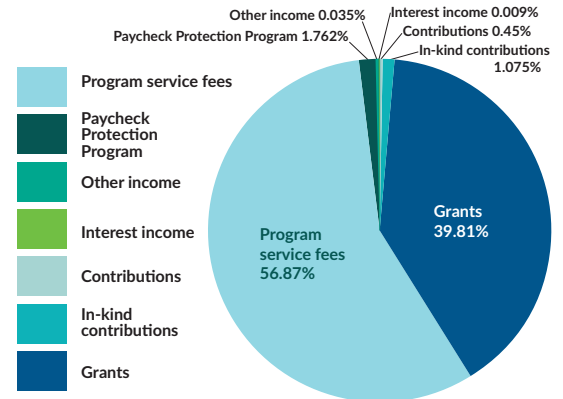
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

| | | | 2020 | 2019 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS | WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS | TOTAL | TOTAL |
| Revenues & support | | | | |
| Program service fees | \$2,973,543 | — | \$2,973,543 | \$3,385,428 |
| Grants | 2,081,532 | — | 2,081,532 | 2,026,702 |
| Contributions | 23,380 | — | 23,380 | 36,982 |
| Paycheck Protection Program | 92,113 | — | 92,113 | — |
| In-kind contributions | 56,218 | — | 56,218 | 19,525 |
| Interest income | 470 | 80 | 550 | 395 |
| Other income | 1,856 | — | 1,856 | 5,475 |
| Total revenues & support | 5,229,112 | 80 | 5,229,112 | 5,474,507 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Program | 4,899,471 | — | 4,899,471 | 4,962,549 |
| Management & general | 306,727 | — | 306,727 | 397,619 |
| Fundraising | 9,440 | — | 9,440 | 9,091 |
| Total expenses | 5,215,638 | — | 5,215,638 | 5,369,259 |
| Changes in net assets | 13,474 | 80 | 13,554 | 105,248 |
| Net assets, beginning of year | 1,127,885 | 26,844 | 1,154,729 | 1,049,481 |
| Net assets, end of year | \$1,141,359 | \$26,924 | \$1,168,283 | \$1,154,729 |

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

| | | | | 2020 | 2019 |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | PROGRAM | MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL | FUNDRAISING | TOTAL | TOTAL |
| Salaries & related expenses | | | | | |
| Salaries | \$1,822,226 | \$172,869 | \$6,418 | \$2,001,513 | \$1,878,902 |
| Payroll taxes | 173,717 | 20,800 | 832 | 195,349 | 234,372 |
| Fringe benefits | 201,317 | 37,674 | 659 | 239,650 | 227,445 |
| Total salaries & related expenses | 2,197,260 | 231,343 | 7,909 | 2,436,512 | 2,340,719 |
| Other expenses | | | | | |
| Contractors and materials | 1,746,352 | — | — | 1,746,352 | 2,240,098 |
| Depreciation | 75,103 | 13596 | 179 | 88,878 | 90,617 |
| Food | 47,565 | — | — | 47,565 | 74,269 |
| Interest | 25,007 | — | — | 25,007 | 24,551 |
| Legal and accounting | — | 35,300 | — | 35,300 | 33,500 |
| Occupancy | 103,737 | 15,976 | 996 | 120,709 | 111,089 |
| Outside services | 68,608 | — | — | 68,608 | 60,058 |
| Program materials | 496,955 | — | — | 496,955 | 245,193 |
| Staff training | 21,531 | 6,416 | — | 27,947 | 34,623 |
| Supplies | 81,403 | 4,096 | 356 | 85,855 | 82,668 |
| Vehicle expenses | 35,950 | — | — | 35,950 | 31,874 |
| | 2,702,211 | 75,384 | 1,531 | 2,779,126 | 3,028,540 |
| Total expenses | \$4,899,471 | \$306,727 | \$9,440 | \$5,215,638 | \$5,369,259 |

REVENUES & SUPPORT EXPENSES



Board of Directors

Sophia E. Jeffery, President
Seneida Torres, Vice President
Ana Andino, 2nd Vice President
Michael King, Treasurer
Maria Perez, Clerk
Sylvia Bethea
Lloyd Harris, Jr.
Robert Jackson
Bernard McClusky
Richard Mills
LaTonia Monroe Naylor
James Rhodes
Lidya Rivera-Early
Carmen Santana
Rhodaja Shubrick
Jeffrey Smith
Grayce-Lynda Sypteras
Christy Torres



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