

SPRINGFIELD PARTNERS *for* COMMUNITY ACTION

HELPING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES.

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



TAXPAYER
BILL OF RIGHTS

Civil Rights
PROTECTED
U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
PROTEGIDOS

Domenic J. Sarno

VACCINATION
STATION
DHS

SPRINGFIELD PARTNERS
COMMUNITY ACTION

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey (center), whose office funds some of our programs, meets with Executive Director Paul F. Bailey, board members and city officials during her tour of our facility.



LETTER from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear reader,

As we reflect on the past year at Springfield Partners for Community Action, it is with a profound sense of achievement and optimism that we recount the impactful strides made in our beloved Springfield community. Our journey through the year has been one of innovation, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to empower and uplift our community members in meaningful ways.

A key focus this year has been on expanding our weatherization and energy conservation programs. These initiatives have been vital for families grappling with rising living costs. Our Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) has notably improved in effectiveness, providing relief and long-term energy savings to about 1,200 households in Western Massachusetts. By reducing energy costs, these programs have made homes safer and more comfortable for our vulnerable families.

I am also proud to highlight the continued success of our esteemed Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. VITA continues to play a pivotal force in promoting economic empowerment by successfully returning nearly \$2 million to our clients. A significant portion of these funds are spent within our community, benefiting private stores and local businesses. As a result, this accomplishment not only enhances individual financial stability but it also stimulates the local economy.

In the realm of early childhood development, our efforts have been particularly impactful. The Early Learning Center has continued to provide a nurturing and enriching environment for the youngest members of our community. By focusing on quality education and supportive systems, we are laying a strong foundation for their future success and well-being.

Our Veterans Program has been pivotal in re-engaging veterans and aiding their community transition. We have addressed the evolving needs of our veterans through services like case management, financial literacy workshops, and various support systems. This holistic approach demonstrates our commitment to our veterans' successful reintegration into civilian life and a welcoming community.

Looking ahead, we envision a Springfield where every resident enjoys enhanced quality of life and access to opportunities. Our ongoing efforts and partnerships are crucial in making this shared vision a reality.

With heartfelt appreciation for your support and a renewed pledge to our mission,

Paul F. Bailey
Executive Director

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:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) | Holy Trinity Church | Springfield Department of Elder Affairs |
| Alden Baptist Church | Holyoke Community College | Springfield Healthy Homes Program |
| Alzheimer's Association | Home City Families | Springfield Office of Housing |
| Bank of America | Internal Revenue Service | Springfield Parent Academy (PACE) |
| Bay Path University | Liberty Bank | Springfield Public Schools |
| Baystate Health | Literacy Lab | Springfield School Volunteers |
| Berkshire Bank | MADCA | Springfield Veterans Center |
| Caring Health Center | Massachusetts Department of Revenue | Springfield WORKS Square One |
| Center for Human Development | Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities | St. John's Congregational Church |
| Community Action Pioneer Valley | Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| Community Development Block Grant | MASSCAP (Massachusetts Association for Community Action) | Urban League of Springfield |
| CHAPA (Citizens' Housing and Planning Association) | Massachusetts Department of Transportation | Valley Opportunity Council |
| Citizens Bank | Mt. Zion Baptist Church | Vets Inc. |
| Commonwealth Mobile Oral Health Services | National Grid | Way Finders |
| Comcast/Xfinity | PeoplesBank | Western Mass Alliance for Digital Equity |
| Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants | People's United Bank | Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness |
| Eversource Gas & Electric | Pioneer Valley Planning Commission | Western New England University |
| Family Services | Raising a Reader Massachusetts | YMCA |
| First Pioneer Valley Dream Center | Reading Success by 4th Grade | |
| Freedom Credit Union | Soldier On | |
| Friends of the Homeless | Springfield College | |
| Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation | | |



Executive Director Clare Higgins, Community Action Pioneer Valley, and Springfield Partners for Community Action Executive Director Paul Bailey connect at the Affordable Connectivity Program outreach event.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

HELPING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES.



Since 2003, our Community Scholarship Program has awarded over \$275,000 to high school graduates and adult learners based on their service to the community. Pictured are some of our 2023 scholarship recipients with our Board.



EDUCATION AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

Operating since 2003, our Community Scholarship Program helps qualified low-income students from Springfield attend colleges or trade schools. Scholarships are awarded annually to adult learners and current-year high school graduates using money from the Community Services Block Grant and private donations. Awards are based in part on the applicants' community service and volunteer efforts, and non-traditional students are encouraged to apply.

In FY23 we:

- Received 18 applications
- Awarded 11 scholarships to:
 - 6 adult learners
 - 5 high school graduates
- Received private funding for one scholarship.

Our program is unique in that we award scholarships based in part on community service and volunteer efforts.

In 2022 Springfield Partners installed a new playground to enrich the experiences of our early learners. At left, a family at our annual open house event, and at right, two of our 2023 preschool graduates; our center provided support for them to learn, grow and be ready for kindergarten and beyond.

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Springfield Partners Early Learning Center provides a warm, responsive, caring, safe and culturally diverse atmosphere for children four weeks to five years old and their families. We have been part of the CPPI (Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative) grant for three years. A Springfield Public School (SPS) teacher comes to our building every day and co-teaches children who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

FY23 Numbers:

- 97 children enrolled
- 92 children met National Performance Indicators (NPIs) related to improved literacy, school readiness and social/emotional skills
- 27 parenting classes offered two 12-part series of "Power of Parenting"
 - 38 parents attended; 12 "graduated" (attended at least 8 of 12 sessions).

FY23 Highlights:

- New playground Summer 2022
- Furniture upgrades in all classrooms Summer 2022
- New windows in all classrooms Fall 2022
- New updated HVAC installed Spring 2023
- Acoustic panels installed in classrooms Fall 2023





HOUSING

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WAP)

WAP helps residents of Hampden County save on their utility bills and age in place by making their homes more energy-efficient. 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.

- To qualify for the program, people must be on **Fuel Assistance or a reduced rate with their utility**. These are **FREE** services to those who qualify.
- In FY23, Springfield Partners assisted 1,250 clients.
- We also began our WAP Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Program and will continue this program for the next four years. We started the Sustainable Energy Resources for Consumers (SERC) Grant for the U.S. Department of Energy, which allows us to put air source heat pumps in municipalities, while continuing to work on our regular WAP Program.
- We are also installing air source heat pumps and windows in homes that qualify.

... many people in our community must choose between paying utilities or covering other essential needs.

We help residents of Hampden County save by making homes more energy-efficient. Our friendly staff of energy auditors will come to your home, inspect attics, windows, basements, appliances and more to find ways to save you money on your utility bills. Once the audit is completed, the upgrades are done by licensed contractors at no charge to the consumer. This service is offered to homeowners and renters who qualify for the low-income rate on their utility bills.





Our Veterans Program helps veterans and their families reconnect to the community. We host Veterans Lunches where people gather to learn about available community resources as well as enjoying fellowship with each other.

INCOME, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ASSET BUILDING

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (ACP)

ACP is a newly funded government benefit that gives a \$30/month credit on Internet services to individuals who qualify. It was created to help individuals access high-speed Internet services, essential in today's society. The program gives eligible low-income residents \$30/month credit on Internet fees. We help individuals complete the application and contact their Internet Service Provider (ISP) to ensure the credit is applied.

Springfield Partners received a \$15,000 grant from the Alliance for Digital Equity to conduct outreach and enrollment of ACP in November 2022, and an additional \$80,800 in April 2023.

Through the Internet, people are able to make doctor's appointments, apply for jobs, stay connected and more. Comcast awarded the Western Massachusetts Alliance for Digital Equity a \$100,000 grant to help promote and enroll community members in ACP. Along with this money, Comcast donated 50 laptops to Springfield Partners to be given out to community members.

In FY23, we:

- Enrolled 100 people in ACP
- Distributed 50 laptops to community members
- Held one enrollment event in partnership with West Springfield Public Schools and Holyoke Community College

Pictured is Senior Vice President Mark Reilly, Government and Regulatory Relations, Comcast Northeast Division; Yamelka Ortiz, Springfield Partners Intake and Resource Specialist, Dalila Wilson-Scott, Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, Comcast Corporation and President, Comcast NBCUniversal Foundation; and three community members who received free computers through the program.



VETERANS

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. We provide case management, financial literacy workshops, education on tenant rights and responsibilities, assistance with transportation, food, VA claims, rent, utilities, clothing, moving, as well as wraparound services and referrals. In FY2021, over 1,200 services were provided to 185 veterans and their households.

In FY2021, over 1,200 services were provided to 185 veterans and their households.



Springfield Partners' VITA tax preparation program relies on dedicated volunteers and interns who provide free tax services to low- and moderate-income community members. Our staff recruits, trains, and helps volunteers with certification through the IRS. This allows taxpayers take advantage of all the credits available to them to receive their maximum refunds. Those refunds are important because it puts money back into the local economy.

HOUSING COUNSELING

Springfield Partners' Housing Counseling program is certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and approved by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), allowing customers to qualify for lower-rate mortgage programs. In FY23, we partnered with Way Finders to support households in the community who are at risk of becoming homeless, experiencing a housing crisis or facing eviction.

In FY23 we:

- Completed 373 applications
- Helped 328 people avoid eviction:
 - Rental arrears: 139 clients
 - Deposit payments (new housing): 87 clients
 - Utility payments: 102 clients
- Springfield Partners received \$200 per application completed, for a total of \$74,600.

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 FY23 we:

- Total returns: 2,513 (state and federal)
- Total refunds: \$1,751,023
- Total earned income tax credits: \$671,675
- Client average refund: \$1,481

Volunteers:

- 15 total volunteers
- 874 volunteer hours

In FY23 we completed 2,513 state and federal returns.



LOW INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC (LITC)

LITC provides 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.

In FY23 we:

- Managed cases of 116 clients, helping them understand and resolve IRS/DOR notices
- Completed prior year tax returns
- Hosted a "Who, Why, When, Where to File" workshop

TRANSPORTATION

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

Destinations have included, but are not limited to, shopping and grocery centers, pharmacies, health and legal appointments, cultural enrichment events, and recreational activities. We are an approved vendor for MassHealth clients. In FY2023, we provided over 1,000 rides to 62 individuals.

In FY2023, we provided over 1,000 rides to 62 individuals.



Springfield Partners Staff and Board attended workshops and panel discussions about the work and importance of Community Action at the 2023 New England Community Action Partnership Conference.

EVENTS AND OUTREACH

(Partial list)

- New England Community Action Partnership Conference (NECAP)
- McKnight Block Party
- Internet for All: Massachusetts Broadband & Digital Equity Summit
- Springfield Public Family Education Expo
- MASSCAP State House Legislative Event
- ACP Outreach & Enrollment Event at West Springfield Library
- Mass Hire Recruitment Corner
- Outreach at MLK Food Pantry
- Outreach Mass Broadband Institute Regional Listening Session
- World Affairs Council Visit
- Comcast & Alliance for Digital Equity Press Event
- National Community Action Foundation (NCAF) 2023 Annual Conference
- Green N Fit Event with Revitalize CDC
- Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
- Educator Job Fair
- Community Baby Shower
- Community Resource Fairs – Independence House, Skyview Terrace, Seniority House
- Scholarship Award Ceremony
- Veterans Cookouts
- Community Action Awareness Day
- Age Friendly Health and Tech Showcase
- Big E Military Appreciation Day



Each year MASSCAP organizes an event at the State House, bringing together legislators and Community Action staff to discuss current public policies that assist our most vulnerable families and residents. Those discussions cover how we can work together—now and in the future—to create sustainable change and provide increased opportunity. Pictured: Springfield Partners staff who attended the State House event.



The World Affairs Council of Western Massachusetts hosted a group from Pakistan visiting the U.S. under the auspices of the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program. The group met with Springfield Partners to learn more about our tax preparation (VITA) program.



FINANCIALS

For the year ended September 30, 2023 with comparative totals for the year ended September 30, 2022.

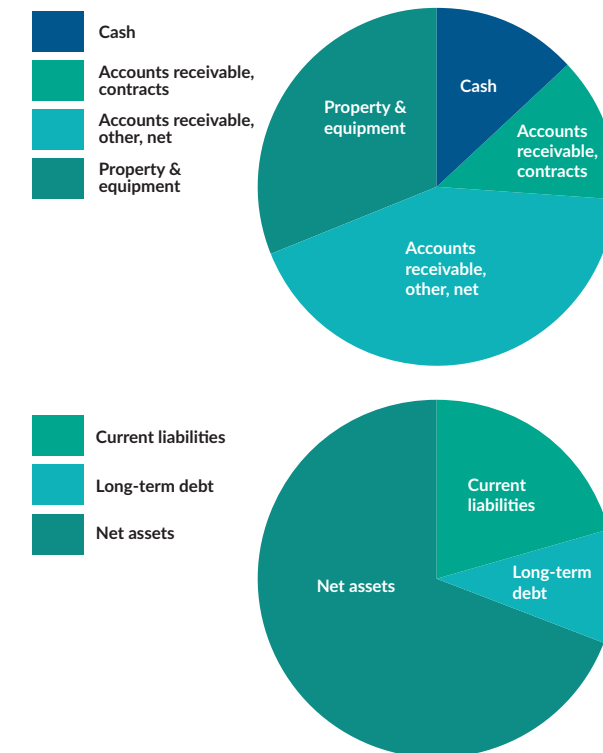
ASSETS

	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Cash	\$490,518	\$843,341
Accounts receivable, contracts	494,378	345,460
Accounts receivable, other, net	1,588,561	807,931
Prepaid expenses	–	34,178
Total Current Assets	<u>2,573,457</u>	<u>2,030,910</u>
Property and Equipment		
Land	82,100	82,100
Building and improvements	1,734,353	1,565,308
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	681,862	657,362
Vehicles	17,251	17,251
	<u>2,515,566</u>	<u>2,322,621</u>
Less: accumulated depreciation	<u>(1,355,173)</u>	<u>(1,222,458)</u>
Total Property and Equipment, net	<u>1,160,393</u>	<u>1,100,163</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$3,733,850</u>	<u>\$3,131,073</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSET

Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable, operating	\$299,819	\$228,079
Accounts payable, property and equipment	57,540	–
Accrued expenses	213,778	152,919
Refundable advances	72,594	221,174
Long-term debt—due within one year	129,700	543,079
Total Current Liabilities	<u>773,431</u>	<u>1,145,251</u>
Long-term debt	382,028	202,849
Total Liabilities	<u>1,155,459</u>	<u>1,348,100</u>
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions	2,551,229	1,755,945
With donor restrictions	27,162	27,028
Total Net Assets	<u>2,578,391</u>	<u>1,782,973</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$3,733,850</u>	<u>\$3,131,073</u>

ASSETS & LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS



Springfield Partners could not do all that we do without the help and support of some amazing volunteers!

From our VITA program to our Veterans Programs to our Early Learning Center, volunteers help in our efforts. Every year we host a lunch to recognize and celebrate them.

Left: Director of Early Learning Center Jenniffer Gonzalez with Sara Staton, one of our "Foster Grandmothers" through our partnership with Urban League.



**HELPING PEOPLE.
CHANGING LIVES.**

Board of Directors

Robert "Cee" Jackson, President

Maria Perez, 1st Vice President

Christy Torres, 2nd Vice President

Michael King, Treasurer

Grayce-Lynda Sypteras, Clerk

Ana Andino

Sylvia Bethea

Calvin Blakes

Yasuo Council

Murielle Gatewood

Sybel Gonzalez

Mickey Harris

Bernard McClusky

Giselle Miranda

James Rhodes

Doreen Rodriguez

Carmen Santana

Laura Taylor

Tony Taylor

Sasha Viands

SPRINGFIELD PARTNERS *for* COMMUNITY ACTION

HELPING PEOPLE.
CHANGING LIVES.

721 State Street, Springfield MA 01109

413.263.6500 *phone*

413.263.6511 *fax*

springfieldpartnersinc.com

