



New York State Community Action Association  
**Helping People. Changing Lives.**

**December  
2021**

**NYSCAA News**

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## **The Promise of Community Action:**

*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.*

## **NYSCAA News:**

### **A Word from NYSCAA's CEO**

Dear Friend,

As 2021 comes to a close, I would like to recognize the efforts of the Community Action Network in responding to another demanding year that continued to require flexibility, resolve, adaptations, and, above all, resiliency. Community Action has once again risen to challenges to meet the needs of struggling families with compassion and empathy. And no less important, the network has done an admirable job in meeting employees' ongoing and ever-changing needs to ensure the health and well-being of both employees and customers.

We are prepared for 2022 and will approach the year with renewed energy and purpose.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome Carolyn Brown as the new Executive Director of PEACE, Inc., We at NYSCAA are pleased that Carolyn has taken on the leadership role at PEACE and look forward to working with her.

I wish you and yours a joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

Thank you,

**Jacqueline Orr**



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## **NYSCAA's 2021 Annual Report is Now Available**

We are excited to release our 2021 Annual Report! Thank you to the Community Action Agencies, our supporters, colleagues, and volunteers who have helped positively impact the communities we serve. The report is available on the [NYSCAA website](#), or you can download the report [here](#).



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**What's New on NYSCAA Learn:**

We are excited to announce that a new course has been added to NYSCAA Learn:  
***Understanding N.E.A.R. Science.***

This course will increase your knowledge of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study and the impact of ACEs on health and opportunity. Research has shown that the leading causes of disease and disability, learning and productivity problems and early death have roots in the cumulative neurodevelopmental impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences. The training aims to share the findings of the ACE study and how we can use these findings to help promote change and increase resilience. The training features Nationally Certified ACE Interface Trainers Laura Rossman (Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.), Tina Zerbian, and Al Meyers, both of Connecting Communities in Action (CCA).



The course provides an opportunity to receive a certificate of completion. As with all of our NYSCAA Learn courses, it is **free** for all NY CAA staff, Board members, and volunteers. [Take the course today!](#)

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## **NYSCAA's Emerging Leaders Institute - Now Accepting Applications for the 2022 Cohort**

Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of NYSCAA's Emerging Leader Institute (ELI) 2022 Cohort. ELI is a year-long leadership development program to build the capacity of future leaders within New York's Community Action Network. This collaborative learning experience incorporates formal training to develop skills and knowledge, peer networking opportunities to build local and statewide relationships, and engaging and interactive discussions based on leadership-related books and articles. NYSCAA encourages all CAA staff looking to enhance their leadership skills to apply. [Learn more about ELI on NYSCAA's website.](#)



### **Application:**

The application includes a short essay that describes your commitment to Community Action, your hopes for your future career path, why you want to participate in ELI, and how you hope to benefit by participating in the program.

### **Cost:**

The cost to participate in ELI is \$199.00. This fee covers the training provided at virtual or in-person seminars (We are anticipating holding two in-person seminars and two virtual seminars in 2022).

**The deadline to apply is Friday, January 14th - [Apply now!](#)**

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## Highlights from New York's CAAs:

### **Action for a Better Community (ABC) - ABC's 2022 Signature Conference Overview**

The theme for [Action for a Better Community's](#) 2022 virtual Signature Conference Series is "Economic Justice for an Inclusive Recovery."

On January 13th and 20th, we will address the laws and policies needed to repair the historical injustices done by racism, redlining, and other forms of economic marginalization. We want to ensure that all people's physical and social/emotional health is equitable. Economic Justice is at the core of the Social Determinants of Health. Everyone must have access to what makes a healthy society.



ABC invites you to demonstrate your commitment to "Economic Justice" by becoming a partner in this social justice initiative. Your support will enable ABC to convene New York State lawmakers, local legislators, leaders in the health care and human services industries, and leaders from financial institutions, and more to determine the best ways to enable equity and justice for all on our way to a new normal.

[Click here](#) for more information about ABC's 2022 Signature Conference.

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### **Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) - Expanding WIC Services with Virtual Support Groups**

The need for federally funded WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) nutrition programs skyrocketed during the pandemic. When COVID-related shutdowns began, many of CEO's programs had to find a way to pivot quickly. Their WIC program had been seeing mothers and children in person only. CEO reacted quickly, by offering remote appointments, and saw their participation rates increase.

While the number of participants in the program has remained consistent, more customers followed through with their remote appointments and received benefits. The opportunity to connect remotely allowed more participants to be able to attend meetings. They didn't have to worry about transportation, coordinating childcare, taking time from work, or other traditional barriers to keeping an appointment. "We saw that our no-show rates really decreased, and overall our participation increased," said Melissa Sacco, WIC Manager at CEO.



Read more about the WIC program's success in [CEO's Annual Report](#), or [watch this video](#) from Spectrum News which showcases the positive impact CEO has had on mothers and children in their community.

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### **Community Action of Greene County - Providing Support to Families in Need**

Shawn Coon said he does not know what he would do without the support of [Community Action of Greene County](#). Shawn, a single father of two young sons, said the agency has helped him with everything from clothes and winter boots for his sons to holiday meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas. He said that the agency has also helped the family through its food pantry and paying so Coon could do their laundry.



"If you need somebody to talk to, they're there," Shawn said, adding that he has used the services of Community Action for approximately eight years. Shawn has also used the agency's Healthy Homes Program, which helped his sons. He said workers through the program came in and made sure he had doctor appointments set up for the boys and helped him learn how to work with the children. "If it wasn't for Community Action and stuff, I don't know what I would do," Shawn said. "They've helped out tremendously." He said he could not thank the agency enough because it has been a great resource to his family.

To donate to Community Action of Greene County, [visit www.cagcny.org](http://www.cagcny.org) or send a check or money order payable to Community Action of Greene County, Inc., 7856 Route 9W, Catskill, N.Y. 12414.

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### **Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County - There When You Need Them Most**

To say 2020 was a challenging year for Maria Castella would be an understatement. First, she contracted COVID-19 at the nursing home where she was employed and ended up hospitalized. Then, her doctors discovered the 52-year-old had breast cancer, and she would need to undergo major surgery. The events turned Maria's otherwise stable life upside down. She was forced from her Orange County home to be closer to the Dyson Cancer Center in Poughkeepsie, where she was treated. The cancer treatments took a toll on her, and she had to give up her job.



Maria soon fell behind on her rent and feared losing her home. She then learned about the [Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County](#). She said the organization gave her a \$1,000 grant to help pay her back rent and gave her food from its food pantry. Her caseworker also helped her fill out applications for the Home Energy Assistance Program and SNAP benefits. Without the help from the Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County, Maria questions if she would ever be able to get back on her feet.

[Click here](#) to read more.

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## Yonkers Community Action Program - *Feeding the Community for Thanksgiving*

Thanksgiving is a day when Americans gather with family and friends to celebrate and give thanks. Thanksgiving is also an annual reminder for many non-profits and individuals to reach out to those in need.



[Yonkers Community Action Program](#) held its annual Thanksgiving food distribution and supplied over 200 families from local Yonkers communities with turkeys, vegetables, and all the accompaniments for a delicious Thanksgiving meal. Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano was on-hand to support the YCAP employees and volunteers.

"We are very grateful for Mr. Spano, our volunteers who helped pack and distribute the food, and the businesses that provided the donations," said Don Brown, Executive Director of YCAP. "It was very gratifying to participate in the kindness of others."

## Monthly Myth Series:

**Myth:** Everyone looks forward to the joy and cheer of the holiday season! - **FALSE!**

**Fact:** Surveys suggest people feel more stress, anxiety, and depression in the period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day than at any other time of the year.

The holiday season can be a tremendously stressful time for many individuals struggling with a mental illness such as depression and anxiety. According to a survey, the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) (NAMI) reported that approximately 24% of people with a diagnosed mental illness find that the holidays make their condition "a lot" worse and 40% "somewhat" worse. The pressure of trying to do everything, planning the perfect holiday, traveling to visit family, saying yes to every event, meeting those year-end deadlines, and the financial burdens of holiday shopping, can be enough to send anyone into a tailspin.



The holiday hustle and bustle cannot only heavily impact individuals who are prone to anxiety, depression, and stress (and a lack of sleep) but can also take a toll on those who have never experienced a mental illness. "For many people, the holiday season is not always the most wonderful time of the year," exclaimed the medical director of NAMI. "What the survey shows is a tremendous need for people to reach out and watch out for each other in keeping with the spirit of the season."

[Click here](#) to read the full article "*Mental health disorders differ from holiday blues.*"



## CSBG National Partner News & Resources:

### CAPLAW - New Resource Library

All of CAPLAW's resources and publications are now available in CAPLAW's new [Resource Library](#). Navigate the different topics to find the resource you need, including:

- CARES Act Benefits for Nonprofit CAAs
- Coronavirus Updates
- Employment
- Sustainability



### National Community Action Partnership (NCAP) - Enroll in Pathways to Excellence!



The National Community Action Partnership is excited to relaunch its [Pathways to Excellence program](#). This program is designed to empower and support CAAs interested in taking their agency to the next level by pursuing excellence through an intentional process of assessment, planning, and capacity building to institutionalize known best-in-class practices from the Community Action network and outlined in the 35 Standards of Excellence. Pathways to Excellence utilizes a new tiered approach, allowing agencies to engage at the right level and supporting the incremental journey towards excellence.

Interested in learning more? Check out the new [Pathways to Excellence webpage](#) for information on the [Standards of Excellence](#), tiered approach, and pricing. [Enrollment is open now](#) to join cohorts starting in December 2021 and January 2022.

### National Community Action Partnership (NCAP) - New Community Action COVID Resources Webpage and COVID-19 Resource Series in Spanish

The Community Action Network's response to COVID-19 is impressive. This page provides access to tools and resources showing how Community Action was and continues to be ready to act, rapidly respond to help individuals and families recover from crisis and create greater resilience. Resource topics include:

- Child Tax Credit
- Emergency Broadband Benefit



- Vaccination

[Click here to navigate to the new COVID Resources page!](#) Also new are the Spanish language versions of the Community Action COVID-19 Resource Series, which can be [accessed and downloaded here](#).

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## National Professional Development Opportunities:

### **NASCSP Winter Training Conference**

February 23rd - March 3rd, 2022

### **National Community Action Partnership's 2022 Management and Leadership Training Conference (MLTC)**

February 2nd - 4th, 2022

The conference will be presented virtually

### **National Community Action Partnership 2022 Annual Convention**

Pre-Convention Training: August 29th - 30th, 2022

Convention: August 31st - September 2nd, 2022

Marriott Marquis New York

### **CAPLAW 2022 National Training Conference**

June 28th - 30th, 2022

Swissotel, Chicago, IL

## Tips, Tools, & Resources:

### ***Child Trends - Addressing Racial Equity Can Boost Well-Being Among School Staff and Students of Color***

Longstanding patterns of racial and ethnic discrimination, both inside and outside of schools, may negatively impact the well-being of school staff of color and contribute to [higher attrition rates](#) than among their White counterparts—a problem the [pandemic may be exacerbating](#). State and local leaders can help by incorporating racial equity components into school employee wellness efforts to ensure that these initiatives address the specific needs of teachers of color and distribute resources and demands fairly across all staff.





Leaders can advance racial equity in staff wellness programs by helping schools improve resources and operations. Three in four Black and Latinx teachers work in schools with a high percentage of students of color. These schools are often under-resourced and offer lower salaries and less administrative support—workplace conditions that directly impact job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Education leaders can improve school conditions for teachers of color by addressing [common sources of workplace stress](#) that are especially pronounced in under-resourced schools.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

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### **Diversity Atlas by Cultural Infusion - 7 Tips to Manage Cultural Equity and Inclusion This Holiday Season**

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people — including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion — are represented in the development and implementation of



workplace policy. Diversity Atlas by Cultural Infusion suggests seven tips and strategies that organizations can employ to make their festive season more inclusive of creating a more engaging, culturally aware, and equitable event that everyone can enjoy and value.

[Click here](#) for the complete list of tips and more.

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### **Institute for Research on Poverty - The Connection Between Unpredictable Work Schedules and Meeting Basic Household Needs**

For decades, many workers in hourly front-line jobs in the retail and foodservice sectors have been subject to low pay and few benefits. More recently, these workers' challenges have been compounded by increasingly unstable and unpredictable work schedules; shifts can be canceled or shortened with little notice, inconsistent days of day they are expected to work, little advance notice when schedules are posted, or having to be on-call without a guarantee of being paid.



New research shows that schedule unpredictability directly connects to how often workers struggle to provide adequate food, housing, and medical care for themselves and their families. Instability can also affect workers' ability to access social safety net programs. In fact, schedule unpredictability can have a more negative socioeconomic impact than a low hourly wage.

[Click here](#) to read the full Policy Brief.

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## **New York Project Hope - Holiday Tips, Resources, and More**

To help New York State residents continue to navigate the changes caused by the pandemic, below you will find links to new emotional support content from [NY Project Hope](#).

**NY Project Hope**  
**Coping with COVID**



- [Tips for the Holidays](#): After challenging months of COVID, many of us may experience a painful sense of loss for past holidays that were joyous occasions of celebration, family gatherings, and gift-giving. Anticipating that it will be challenging to get through the holidays may not make them easier, but acknowledging feelings and problems in advance can help have a more joyous holiday experience.
- [Managing Uncomfortable Conversations During the Holidays](#): As exciting and cozy it may feel, the holiday season can also bring up uncomfortable conversations. This can include talks around grief, appearances, loss, relationship status, finances, political beliefs, and more. The holidays can be incredibly challenging with their traditions and family rituals, as we're more easily reminded of what's changed or is different than it used to be. Addressing these topics can be difficult, but this quick guide can help you mentally prepare and manage some of that stress.
- [NY Project Hope Online Wellness Groups](#): Support groups that provide a time and place to talk about the emotional challenges and the stress of COVID. Whether you're feeling anxious or struggling with a relationship, there's a support group that can help you cope. The online wellness groups are open to everyone, and no registration is needed. The groups are free, confidential, and anonymous. You can join online or by phone. For more information about all of the NY Project Hope Online Wellness Groups, see [this flier](#).
- [Customer Service Workers During Covid-19](#): From staffing to inventory, there are many shortages these days, and it can be particularly overwhelming as we get closer to the holidays. Most people working in hospitality, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping centers, and other positions with many public interfaces have felt stress and anxiety these days.

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## **Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy - Child Poverty Reduction Act Signed Into Law, Boldly Committing NYS to Fighting Poverty**

New York State Governor, Kathy Hochul, has signed the [Child Poverty Reduction Act](#) into law, boldly committing New York leaders to a goal of cutting child poverty in half in the next ten years and taking immediate steps toward that goal. With this law, New York joins a small handful of states leading the way on poverty-fighting legislation. The enactment of the Child Poverty Reduction Act signals that New York State will no longer tolerate having two in five children living just above or in poverty.



“The Child Poverty Reduction Act is the result of work by a broad coalition of partners who envision a state that works to raise children out of poverty and into opportunity,” said Kate Breslin, President, and CEO of the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy. The signing of this bill into law is the first step toward a new way of legislating – one that takes into account

the impact of public policy on those often overlooked. For too long, New York has allowed hundreds of thousands of children to endure the hardships of poverty—in times of recession and in times of plenty. This law changes that trajectory.

[Click here](#) to read more.

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### **SHRM - How to Make Holiday Celebrations More Inclusive**

December is the time of year to be jolly, or so the department store TV commercials tell us. However, the traditional year-end company “holiday” festivities can leave some workers feeling left out and unhappy. As a result, HR professionals, who often are tasked with planning the events, can become frustrated. The perennial “December dilemma” occurs every year between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day when several religious and secular holidays arise. Emotions can be heightened, tensions can rise, and misunderstandings can occur. Even those with the best intentions make mistakes.



While the U.S. workforce is growing increasingly diverse, Christians still make up about three-quarters of the country’s population. Yet if even just a small number of employees feel excluded, experts say it can harm an organization’s engagement and productivity. So, developing a greater awareness of which religious holidays are important to employees and how people prefer to celebrate (or not) can benefit workers and employers alike.

[Click here](#) to read more about making the holiday season more inclusive for all.

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### **The White House - Putting the Public First: Improving Customer Experience and Service Delivery for the American People**

On Monday, December 13, 2021, President Biden signed an Executive Order that aims to improve customer experience and service delivery across agencies of the federal government with an eye toward equity and accountability. The order ([EO 14058 – Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#)) directs specific programs and agencies to assess the customer experience and improve front-facing systems by reducing administrative burdens and incorporating new technologies. Of

particular interest to the Community Action Network, the EO: directs the Secretary of Agriculture to simplify enrollment and recertification for SNAP and WIC; directs the Secretary of HHS to support coordination between programs to ensure automatic enrollment for eligible beneficiaries; and requires a redesign of the USA.gov website to be a centralized “Federal Front Door,” where customers can access information and applications for multiple federal programs and benefits at once. The White House has released a [statement and factsheet on the EO](#).

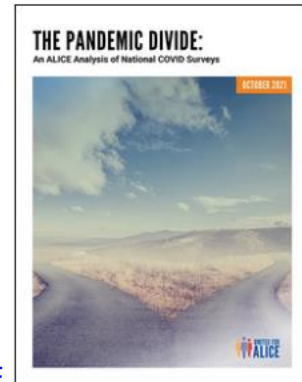


THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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## **United for ALICE - *The Pandemic Divide: An ALICE Analysis of National COVID Surveys***

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed critical shortcomings in our economy and intensified hardship for many households who were already struggling. Before the pandemic, 42% of U.S. households were already unable to make ends meet. This includes households with income below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and ALICE (Asset, Limited, Income, Constrained, Employed) households. With income above the FPL, ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households earn too much to qualify as “poor.” However, they are still unable to cover basic household expenses in the counties where they live.



A new report from United for ALICE, [The Pandemic Divide: An ALICE Analysis of National COVID Surveys](#), provides the first look at the impact of the pandemic on ALICE households. The Report reveals that experiences and realities diverged during the pandemic: ALICE families fared significantly worse than higher-income households — financially, physically, and emotionally.

This research, along with the [ALICE & COVID-19 Tracker](#) and other resources, aims to shed light on the experiences of ALICE households, fill gaps left by traditional economic measures, and help policymakers and community stakeholders make data-informed decisions to address the root causes of financial hardship.

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## **U.S. Census Bureau - *Statement on 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Data***

In November, the U.S. Census Bureau announced it would delay the release of the 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data, originally scheduled for December 2021, due to the impacts of COVID-19 on data collection. We continue to make progress towards a mid-to late-March 2022 data product release.



Since November, the U.S. Census Bureau has refined its methodology to reduce the impact of the nonresponse bias due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology improves the 2020 data input by comparing characteristics for responding and nonresponding households using administrative, third-party, and decennial census data. The 2020 input data are then integrated with the inputs from 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, that were processed using the standard ACS methodology, in order to provide the basis for creating our 5-year data products.

The Census Bureau recognizes the critical importance of the ACS 5-year data, in particular, on government and business decision-making and the need for quality ACS data for that purpose. Over the next month, the Census Bureau will conduct quality reviews to ensure that this methodology is performing appropriately at all levels of geography and that the resulting

data meet our quality standards. [Visit the U.S. Census Bureau Newsroom](#) for periodic updates about the ACS data release.

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### ***Wipfli* - How Succession Planning Can Help You Compete in the Talent Market**

Employers are struggling to find talent in today's competitive market. One of the reasons for this is the historically low number of people in this country over 18.



Another reason is COVID-19-related. People are re-examining their lives due to their experiences throughout the pandemic and, in many cases, making drastic changes — including dropping out of the market altogether. The Department of Labor recently released data indicating that in April, May, and June of 2021, 11.5 million people self-selected out of the marketplace. We face a talent crisis that will continue for several more years, at minimum.

Now, more than ever, employers must implement practices to retain talent. One highly effective practice is succession planning. When employees feel valued and have a future vision of their opportunities, they are more inclined to stay with their current employer. [Click here to read more.](#)

### **The NY Network:**



[\*\*Connect with New York's Community Action Agencies.\*\*](#)

New York State Community Action Association, Inc.  
2 Charles Boulevard, Guilderland, NY 12084  
Phone: 518-690-0491