



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

**September
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:



**"Strengthen and Sustain: Building Resources and Resiliency in our Communities"
NYSWDA & NYSCAA's 2021 Annual Conference**

The [Strengthen and Sustain: Building Resilient Communities Conference](#) brings together representatives from Community Action and Weatherization Agencies. Conference participants will come together to learn, be inspired, inspire others, and discuss strategies for meeting new challenges. We invite you to join us to gain insights from a wide variety of speakers – from Community Action and Weatherization staff to academicians, policymakers, practitioners, and more.

This year's virtual conference will feature over 30 speakers and over 30 sessions focusing on topics including Fatherhood, Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Workforce Development, Human Resources, Capacity Building, Leadership, Mental Health First Aid, Voter Redistricting, and much more! Registration includes access to all sessions, networking events, raffles, and exhibitors! [Click here](#) to view the conference agenda!

The deadline for registration is *Thursday, September 30, 2021* - don't wait, [register today!](#)

Highlights from New York's CAAs:

LifeWorks Community Action Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month with Longstanding Photography Exhibit

Estamos Aqui (We Are Here) is a curated black-and-white photography exhibit featuring the work of Saratoga's Latinx immigrant community. [LifeWorks Community Action](#) holds an annual photography workshop that teaches the basic concepts and techniques of photography and storytelling. The project brings together people from across the community and around the globe. Estamos Aqui (We Are Here) empowers the voices of the Latinx community by claiming the narrative and centering the voices of the Latinx immigrant community in the Saratoga County region of Upstate New York.



Irma Rivera, an LCAP advocate, leads the 2019 photography workshop.

If you can't make it out to see the exhibit in person, you can check out the Estamos Aqui (We Are Here) website, which features the photography of the 10+ years the project has been running: <https://www.estamosaquisaratoga.com/>.

[Pictured Top Right: Irma Rivera, leads the 2019 photography workshop]

Yonkers Community Action (YCAP) holds a graduation celebration for its Summer Leadership Youth Program!

YCAP's Youth Leadership Program is all about empowering the youth in the Yonkers community to set goals, understand their own strengths and weaknesses, and focus their energies on positive activities which help them navigate adolescence and realize their potential as adults. Because racism, classism, and oppression disproportionately affect our more vulnerable youth, developing strong communication and collaboration skills, and trust is critical to succeeding as adults in the workplace and in life.



YCAP collaborated with the Yonkers Artist Residence Program (YARP) for a free five-week skill development program for students in grades 6, 7, and 8 that focused on leadership skills and character building. The program develops trust and community building, increases feelings of competency in school, positive friendships, personal appearance, behavior and exposes positive, drug-free role models. YARP artists introduced them to various art forms, including photography, silk screening, sculpting, painting, and drawing.

The youth also attended career-counseling workshops, held in partnership with the YCAP Board of Directors, where they discussed and learned about careers in accounting, law and real estate.

The results were outstanding. All our participants learned valuable, life-long skills to help them avoid risky behaviors such as illegal substance use, gang involvement, crime, and bullying.

The students also all reported increased feelings of self-worth, competency, and a sense of purpose.

"The youth leadership program started as a group of kids coming together to learn leadership skills and ended up a family," said Naya Santiago, Program Assistant.

Monthly Myth Series:

Myth: Poor people actively choose more convenient fast food places over other food options.
- FALSE!

Fact: Chain restaurants and junk food brands use predatory business practices, including targeted advertisements towards children and exploiting government programs, to be the dominant business in low-income neighborhoods, and continues to hoard resources through low wages and redlining franchise ownership.

NCAP is dedicating the month of September to raising hunger awareness. In acknowledgment of Hunger Action Month, it is important to recognize what Andrea Freeman, from the University of Berkeley Law, terms "food oppression," which is defined as the overabundance of fast food and lack of access to healthier foods which increases a population's vulnerability to food-related death and disease.

"Not only does the fast food industry exploit the market forces that drive supermarkets and produce stands out of low-income urban neighborhoods, but it also specifically targets African Americans and Latinos through race-based marketing and advertising, and expends extensive resources lobbying the government for subsidies, exemptions, endorsements, and other perks. Cooperation between the state and the fast-food industry engenders artificially low prices, permits public schools to push fast-food products and advertising, and leads to false information about the health benefits and harms of fast food. This close association between the government and the fast-food industry can foment confusion and misinformation, yet it remains largely hidden from the public," Freeman states in [Fast Food: Oppression through Poor Nutrition](#), published in the California Law Review.

[The Washington Post](#) reported that fast food restaurants spend upwards of \$700 million each year to market to children and teens, which remains an unregulated market practice. [Reports show that junk food ads disproportionately advertise to Black and Hispanic kids](#) and blanket neighborhoods that are known food deserts. Even more sinister was the use of federal programs like business loans for fast food franchises, initially meant to alleviate hunger in impoverished neighborhoods and quell rioting in the mid-1960s through an entrepreneurial pathway to the middle class. The outcome was



successfully integrating fast food into Black, low-income communities while keeping wages down and keeping Black franchise owners from expanding outside Black neighborhoods, which is discussed in Chin Jou's book, *Super Sizing Urban America: How Inner Cities Got Fast Food With Government Help*.

"Foodie disdain for 'fast food values' eludes the ways in which historical circumstances, governmental practices, and targeted, relentless food industry advertising helped create and reinforce fast food consumption in America's low-income urban communities," Jou explained in [an article in The New Republic](#).

The influence of fast-food giants and corporations seem daunting to go up against, but there are ways to take action! [Read CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute's policy brief on "Reducing Predatory Marketing of Unhealthy Foods & Beverages in New York City."](#)

CSBG National Partner News & Resources:

Updated and New CAPLAW CSBG Client Eligibility Resources!

To assist the Community Action Network in navigating and shaping client eligibility for CSBG-funded services, CAPLAW has updated its [Guide to Client Eligibility](#) and issued a [special supplement](#) that addresses income eligibility in disaster and emergency scenarios. The updated guide contains an appendix comparing definitions of income and income eligibility levels across programs commonly administered by CAAs such as CSBG, LIHEAP, Weatherization, and Head Start. It also addresses cost allocation among programs with different eligibility requirements. The supplement discusses how a client's receipt of emergency-related benefits can impact their eligibility for CSBG and other federal programs.



With the start of the fiscal year 2022 on October 1, client income eligibility for CSBG CARES and regularly appropriated CSBG funding (including any FY21 CSBG funding carried over into FY22) [will revert](#) to either 100% or 125% of the federal poverty line. CAAs preparing for this change should review their income eligibility policies to identify any areas of flexibility that allow them to continue serving those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges. We hope these resources will answer some of the most common questions related to income eligibility during this period.

National Professional Development Opportunities:

National Community Action Partnership 2022 Annual Convention

Pre-Convention Training: **August 29-30, 2022**
Convention: **August 31-September 2, 2022**
Marriott Marquis New York
1535 Broadway, New York, New York 10036

Tips, Tools, & Resources:

Census Bureau Reports Shows the Poverty Rate for 2020 is up 1% from 2019

COVID, lockdowns, and stimulus really affected poverty indicators across the board from 2019 to 2020, [according to the information in three different reports from the Census Bureau](#). Median household income and real median earnings of all workers decreased. However, for full-time, year-round workers, earnings increased. Data also showed that the first two rounds of stimulus checks significantly reduced the supplemental poverty rates for Black and Latino children. And while 91.4% of people were covered by health insurance for all or part of 2020, it still means 280 million Americans did not have health insurance at any point during 2020.



Read more in-depth about income, poverty, and health insurance in real numbers across the United States in these three reports:

- [Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020](#)
 - [Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2020](#)
 - [The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2020](#)
-

Census Bureau Releases New York State Data Profile!

New state profiles by the Census Bureau have data visualizations for each state and county denoting population, race and ethnicity, diversity, age, and housing. Here are some key stats from New York:

- Population (up 7.4% to 331.4 million).
- Race and ethnicity (White alone 61.6%; Black alone 12.4%; Hispanic 18.7%; Asian alone 6%; American Indian and Alaska Native alone 1.1%; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone 0.2%; Some Other Race alone 8.4%; Two or More Races 10.2%).
- Diversity Index (61.1%, up from 54.9%).
- Under-18 (down 1.4%) and adult population (up 10.1%).
- Housing units (up 6.7%) and vacancies (down to 9.7%).



Take a look at the more in-depth stats [here on the Census website](#) and [compare them to the rest of the Northeast](#) or between [other states](#).

New York State of Health - The Deadline for Coverage in 2021 Extended!

To allow as many consumers as possible to access newly enhanced tax credits, and in light of the ongoing public health emergency, **NY State of Health has extended its Open Enrollment Period**



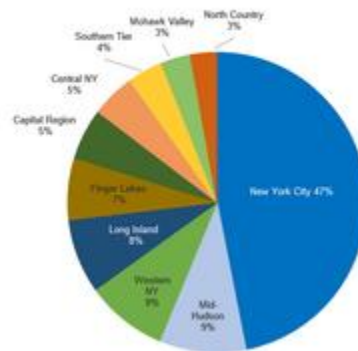
for Qualified Health Plans to December 31, 2021. Individuals eligible for other NY State of Health programs - Medicaid, Essential Plan, and Child Health Plus - can enroll year-round. The best way for consumers to receive assistance at this time is to [phone a navigator or other NY State of Health assistor](#) for help.

Additional information on [NY State of Health](#) insurance options during the COVID-19 emergency can be found [here](#).

Office of the New York State Comptroller (OCS) Outlines Challenges and Recommendations for Broadband Access Across the State - Availability, Access, and Affordability

While New York has made great progress in making high-speed connections available across the state and is currently ranked second among states in the percentage of the population with broadband available at home, 1 million (13.3%) of New York households do not have subscriptions to broadband internet. What is telling about those numbers is that many of these households earn less than \$20,000 annually or are located in rural counties.

FIGURE 9 – Distribution of New York Households Without Broadband Access, by Region, 2019



Recent developments in federal policy provides an opportunity for New York to take advantage of flexible funding under ARP and infrastructure to improve broadband access. Recommendations proposed by OCS would be to:

- Accelerate universal availability of the highest-speed connections, including rural areas;
- Enhance access for low-income households; and
- Improve affordability, particularly for low-income residents.

[Read the full report here on the OCS website.](#)

Thrifty Food Plan is Updated to Reflect the New Max SNAP Benefits, Market Prices, and Dietary Guidelines

For the first time since 2006, the USDA reevaluated the Thrifty Food Plan to reflect updated data on food prices, food composition, and consumption patterns, and currently dietary guidance in the most recent 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The plan acknowledges challenges in food preparation and consumer preferences versus nutritional needs in a way that many prior iterations of the plan never did. As pointed out in this [Brookings opinion piece](#), when food writer Jeffrey Steingarten tried to stick to the plan back in the 90s, he gave up after four days in a mere five-day challenge and while he optimized spending, his time was beleaguered by the intensive cooking and clean-up required. The USDA Market Baskets (weekly amounts of food and beverage categories) now include more convenient items like ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, canned beans, and pre-prepared entrees and sides like soups and frozen pizza.



Supplemental tools like sample menus and how the Market Baskets can be translated into practical meals and snacks will be made available later this year at [MyPlate.gov](#).

You can download and access the 2021 Thrifty Food Plan along with supplemental materials [here on the Food and Nutrition Service USDA website](#).

Wipfli LLP Virtual Trainings

- **October 6, 2:00-3:30pm EST** - [Fraud Risk management for Senior Leadership: Don't get caught in the middle](#)
- **October 13, 2:00-5:00pm EST** - [Foundational Human Resources for Nonprofits](#)
- **October 14, 11:00am-4:00pm EST** - [Senior Human Resources Forums for Nonprofits](#)
- **October 19, 11:00-4:00pm EST** - [CSBG Organizational Standards Boot Camp](#)
- **October 26-28, 1:30-5:00pm EST** - [Head Start/Early Head Start Regulation Boot Camp](#)

The NY Network:



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

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