



GROWING OUR IMPACT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



FY2023

Annual Appeal Donors

FRIENDS **\$1-\$99**

Gloria Abramoff
Robert Blackman
Snjezana Bosnjak
Charles & Deborah Cary
Gretchen & Richard Ellison

Valerie Fernald
Grazyna LaFrance
Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Matulaitis
Margaret O'Connor
Maureen Power

Shaw's Give Back
Where It Counts program
George Tetler
UMass Chan CARES Campaign

SUPPORTING **MEMBERS** **\$100-\$299**

Rich & Wendy Ardizzone
Norman Bitsoli
Beverly Campbell
Rachel Collins
Jannelle Correa
Lillian Cox
Kathryn Crockett
Arianna Curet
Ecotec, Inc.
FW Madigan Company, Inc.
Fidelity Brokerage Services
LLC
Allen Fletcher

Fraticeili Oil Company, Inc.
Eve Gilmore
Dale & Jean Harger
Darlene Heywosz
IBEW Local Union 96
In honor of Steve Desmarais
In honor of Steve Desmarais
In Memory of Steve Desmarais
Noreen Johnson Smith
Thuha Le
Leominster Credit Union
Millbury Federal Credit Union

Nault Architects
North Atlantic States Regional
Council of Carpenters
O'Connell & O'Connell P.C.
Janet Rivard
Edward Robinson
Stop & Shop Bags 4 My Cause
Southbridge Credit Union
Struck Catering
Wanda Wachira
Janice Weekes
Gabrielle Wilson
Donald & Norah Xenos

FOUNDING **CHAMPIONS** **\$300-\$999**

AbbVie Employee
Engagement Fund
Coghlin Services Fund
Kathleen Dow
Christine Fant
Warner & Mary Fletcher

Fidelity Bank
Ellen M. Ganley
In Memory of Diane Irwin
Mary & Robert Knittle
Mastermans, LLP

Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Sigel
Todd Tallman
United Way of MA Bay &
Merrimack Valley
Worcester Railers

LEADERS **\$1,000+**

Kerry Brennan
Blue Cross Blue Shield
Adriana & Marybeth Campbell

Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Peter Martin

United Way of Central
Massachusetts

A MESSAGE FROM OUR

Chief Executive Officer



MARYBETH CAMPBELL
Chief Executive Officer



DONALD G. XENOS
Board Chair

WCAC HAD A YEAR OF TREMENDOUS GROWTH IN 2023

that manifested in several ways including our staffing and services, and through the implementation of our philosophy to improve economic mobility via client centered decision-making. We began the year by moving and settling into our newly renovated main office space and concluded the year by unpacking boxes in three new Head Start classrooms in Leicester and East Brookfield. Throughout the year, we served a record number of new heating assistance clients reaching nearly 17,000 households, and placed more than 600 young people into work experiences at nearly 100 employer sites. Our Resiliency Center staff more than doubled and are actively supporting hundreds of clients with financial empowerment coaching and community navigation strategies.

Additionally, we launched a new guaranteed basic income program, and contributed to a significant family nutrition pilot as one of three Healthy Family programs in the Commonwealth in collaboration with Massachusetts General

Hospital. Our growth has been the result of great commitment to compassion, innovation, and a focus on improving our clients' experiences throughout the agency.

We continue to pursue creative ways to find solutions to age-old issues and are constantly striving to streamline processes to maximize convenience, promote efficiency and improve client experiences across programs. We continue to embrace partnerships with countless community organizations who share our commitment to eradicating poverty, inequality, and injustice. In the year ahead we'll continue to push for necessary policy changes and critical budgetary allocations to protect and sustain the advancements we have made, always mindful of our mission and values to improve the communities where we live and work.

Marybeth Campbell
Chief Executive Officer

Donald G. Xenos
Board Chair



VISIT OUR WEBSITE
AT **WCAC.NET** FOR
MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT OUR
PROGRAMS AND
SERVICES.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Donald G. Xenos
CHAIR

Karen Rucks-Walker
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ASSISTANT TREASURER

Donna Lombardi
CLERK

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Designee for City Manager Eric Batista

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Arianna Curet
Marco Estrella

Maricelis Gonzalez

Peter J. Martin, Esquire

Kristen Lemire

Gladys Rodriguez-Parker
*Designee for Congressman
James P. McGovern*

Janice Ryan Weekes

Jack Salisbury
Head Start Policy Council Designee

Miurka Torres



CONNECT WITH US @WCACINFO
ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER
@WORCESTERCOMMUNITYACTION
ON INSTAGRAM



2023 PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Heating & Energy Assistance

- WCAC's Home Energy Assistance Program (**LIHEAP**) processed 16,473 applications, delivering over **\$17 MILLION IN HEATING BENEFITS** via 58 vendors to **12,790 HOUSEHOLDS**.
- **50% OF THOSE HOUSEHOLDS** receiving heating assistance were households with at least one **ELDERLY** resident; **12%** were households with **CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SIX**; **40%** of households were either self-employed or otherwise **EARNING WAGES**; **2%** were receiving **UNEMPLOYMENT**.
- **1,908 HOUSEHOLDS** improved energy efficiency and/or their energy burden was reduced through **WCAC'S ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS** with **623 HOUSEHOLDS** (1,314 people) receiving **HEATING SYSTEMS REPAIRED OR REPLACED**, keeping them safe and secure with heat.
- Only **556 HOUSEHOLDS** needed **SERVICE RESTORED** through WCAC after disconnection due to the agency's strong shut-off prevention efforts.



2023 PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Emergency Assistance

- **2,017 HOUSEHOLDS** received **EMERGENCY FUEL** deliveries and **UTILITY PAYMENTS** totaling more than **\$1.5 MILLION** to remediate no-heat emergencies through WCAC's Emergency Fuel Fund, which is generously supported by private donations from local utilities, and other community

and banking partners. Donated funds included \$624,486 allocated to 1,410 households throughout WCAC's service area and another 607 households within the City of Worcester supported by \$1 million dollars in City ARPA funding.

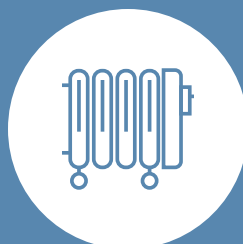
FUEL ASSISTANCE

When the community was faced with the largest rate increases in recent memory for heating oil and an over 60% increase in the cost of electricity, generous donors supported WCAC, the City of Worcester supported WCAC and the state legislature provided supplemental heating. First-time

applications increased by 44% over the previous year, and overall applications increased 18%. WCAC's dynamic fuel assistance staff met the challenge of the winter heating season, which coincided with the agency's office relocation in the middle of winter, to provide critical service to thousands.



**623 HOUSEHOLDS
HAD HEATING SYSTEMS
REPAIRED OR REPLACED**



**50% OF HOUSEHOLDS
RECEIVING HEATING
ASSISTANCE HAD AT LEAST
ONE ELDERLY RESIDENT**

ENERGY

Throughout 2023, WCAC's Energy Efficiency program focused its support on clients' resilience to climate change, expanding and increasing the ability to improve homes and ultimately reduce our

collective carbon footprint. Eligible participants are upgrading their heating systems to high efficiency Air Source Heat Pumps, providing clean, predictable and cost-effective heating and cooling.



**2,017 EMERGENCY FUEL
DELIVERIES AND UTILITY
PAYMENTS MADE**



**\$1.5 MILLION
REMEDIED
NO-HEAT EMERGENCIES
THROUGH WCAC'S
EMERGENCY FUEL FUND**



2023 PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Early Education and Care

- Early Head Start Home Educators conducted **3,532 IN-PERSON VISITS** for infants and toddlers, serving a total of **68 FAMILIES** in 2022-23.
- Head Start served **204 PRESCHOOLERS** during the 2022-2023 school year, **104** enrolled in **FULL-DAY** and **100** in a **PART-DAY** program, allowing **131 PARENTS** to hold **EMPLOYMENT** with another **35** either in **JOB TRAINING** or **SCHOOL**.
- **84 PRESCHOOLERS** were identified as **DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS** with one of six languages other than English in use as the primary language of their family at home.
- **74 PRESCHOOL CHILDREN 'GRADUATED'** from WCAC's Head Start program ready to enter Kindergarten.
- The **HEAD START** program was supported by **5 INDIVIDUALS** providing **VOLUNTEER SERVICES** throughout the school year, including 1 of whom are current or former Head Start/Early Head Start parents.
- Healthy Families of Southern Worcester County (**HFSWC**) provided a total of **1,481 VIRTUAL HOME VISITS** to families promoting positive parenting choices and the prevention of child abuse and neglect to **40 FIRST-TIME PARENTS**.



EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE

WCAC's Head Start program moved to a new innovative communication tool, Learning Genie, and staff became trained as Mobility Mentors to provide improved connection and support for families.

In a continued effort to maximize positive impact on local families, WCAC expanded our facility footprint, opening three new classrooms - one in East Brookfield, two in Leicester.



**74 PRESCHOOLERS
GRADUATED FROM WCAC'S
HEAD START PROGRAM READY
FOR KINDERGARTEN**



**HFSWC PROVIDED
1,481 VIRTUAL HOME VISITS TO
40 FIRST-TIME PARENTS**



2023 PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Education & Employment

- **762 YOUTH** received **EMPLOYMENT** through WCAC's Job & Education Center employment programs including 582 through the **YOUTHWORKS** Summer Jobs Program and 180 through the YouthWorks Year Round Program.
- **692** received robust **SKILLS** and **WORK-READINESS** training.
- During Summer 2023, **47%** of the youth were in their **FIRST JOB, EARNING \$2,400** over the six week work experience.
- **44 INDIVIDUALS** participated in **HiSET** preparation classes; **11** in **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION** preparation, with **35** individuals having earned their HiSET or another nationally recognized **CREDENTIAL, CERTIFICATE** or **DEGREE** relating to the achievement of educational or vocational skills.
- **110 YOUTH** received case management through the **SAFE & SUCCESSFUL YOUTH INITIATIVE**.



JOB & EDUCATION CENTER

During 2023, WCAC's Job & Education Center (JEC) served its largest number of Youth Works participants in recent history! JEC launched a new online learning tool - Talent LMS - in January 2023, offering young people a robust, dynamic curriculum of work readiness training, easily accessible and self-paced to maximize participation and completion.

Evan Smith first came to WCAC to enroll in HiSET classes. He has since been a YouthWorks participant, completed and achieved his HiSET and in 2023 began working for WCAC at the Webster Head Start Center.

In 2023, **Kimora Scott**, a former JEC YouthWorks participant (having worked at both the Regional Environmental Council and Central Mass Regional Planning Commission) was awarded the Rising Workforce Leader Award at the Workforce Solutions Group 14th Annual MA Jobs and Workforce Summit.



**35 INDIVIDUALS
EARNED THEIR HiSET OR
ANOTHER NATIONALLY
RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION**



**762 YOUTH WERE
EMPLOYED THROUGH WCAC'S
JOB & EDUCATION CENTER**



Resiliency Center/ Financial Empowerment

- **27 VOLUNTEERS** prepared federal and state **INCOME TAX RETURNS** at **NO COST** for **901 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS** through WCAC's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program generating **\$1,403,000** in **RETURNS** to the community. The average return was **\$1,864**.
- **447 INDIVIDUALS** experiencing economic hardship received community resource navigation, consultations or **COACHING** from WCAC's **FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT** Coaches.
- **26 INDIVIDUALS** enrolled in a new **GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME** pilot.
- **30 CLIENTS** utilized a **ZERO-INTEREST LOAN** of \$600 via Axuda.



RESILIENCY CENTER

The Resiliency Center grew rapidly in 2023 both in terms of welcoming new staff members and expanding programming offered to the community. From an idea in 2019, the Resiliency Center has grown to a staff of nine who connect with clients daily to complete SNAP and RAFT applications, provide financial empowerment coaching, and provide referrals to community resources.

As an example of the Resiliency Center's impact, one client worked with a WCAC Financial Empowerment coach to obtain flex funding to apply for her national certification in phlebotomy. Since then, she has obtained full-time employment, opened a savings

account, has an appointment to open a credit builder loan and received a matched savings incentive. She obtained rental assistance to catch up on past due rent after a period of unemployment and was also connected with wellness support to cope with past trauma. Due to her new phlebotomy certification, she qualified for a pay increase of \$4.50 more per hour, bringing her salary up to a wage that will support her and her daughter going forward. As a participant in the agency's Guaranteed Basic Income pilot program, she will receive additional support and coaching for the next year as she works towards her household's goals.



**27 VOLUNTEERS
PREPARED INCOME TAX
RETURNS FOR 901 LOW-INCOME
HOUSEHOLDS**



**THE VITA PROGRAM
GENERATED MORE THAN
\$1,403,000 IN TAX
RETURNS**



**THE AVERAGE CLIENT RETURN
WAS \$1,864**



**26 INDIVIDUALS
ENROLLED IN A NEW
GUARANTEED BASIC
INCOME PILOT**



FY2023

In-Kind Goods and Services

COAT DRIVE

MAPFRE USA

Rockland Trust

HEAD START

Cheryl Barrett

Andrea Boisvert

Ramona Bradrick

Maureen Clifford

Nancy Coderre

Joanne Dall

Delta Kappa Gamma –
Alpha Gamma Chapter

Linda Denault

Peter Durant

Amanda Fournier

Patricia Guiou

Christine Kane-Latour

Dennis Lataille

Kristen Lemire

Jeanne Manbeck

Dana Mara

Peter Martin

Becky Maska-Burlingame

Joseph McKenna

Emily Miranda

Michael Moore

Jarrade Nieber

Mary O'Coin

Nancy Rheault

Carmen Rivera

Emily Rivera

Maritza Rivera

Margaret Sbordy

Scholastic Sports Zone

Evelyn Sinni

Southbridge Credit Union

Daniel & Collen Turgeon

United Way of South Central Massachusetts

Jennifer Westwell

HEALTHY FAMILIES

AllCom Credit Union

Catholic Charities

Kennedy Donovan Center/Early Intervention

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line

South Central WIC

St. Paul's Parish

Tufts Health Insurance

You Inc. Family Resource Center

You Inc. Southbridge Community
Connections

You Inc. Young Parent Support Program

ADMINISTRATION

WCAC Board of Directors

PENTA Communications, Inc.

VITA Volunteers



Private Grants & Donations

RESILIENCY CENTER

DCU

United Way of South Central MA

Berkshire Bank Foundation, Inc.

ADMINISTRATION

Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation

United Way of Central Massachusetts

HEAD START

Fundacion MAPFRE

Southbridge Credit Union

United Way of Central MA

United Way of South Central MA

JOB & EDUCATION CENTER

Office of District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr.

The Hanover Insurance Group Foundation, Inc.

EMERGENCY FUEL FUND

Anonymous

bankHometown

Cornerstone Bank

Ms. Kathy Dulude

Global Oil

Ms. Erin Guyette

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

Hyde Charitable Foundation

IC Federal Credit Union

In honor of Ann Wardlow

Mr. Howard Letendre

Massachusetts Bankers Association Charitable Foundation, Inc.

Mirick O'Connell Attorneys at Law

National Grid

National Grid/United Way of Central MA

Dr. Nicholas A Smyrniotis

UniBank

United Way of Central MA

Dr. Matthias Walz

Webster Five

2ND ANNUAL RESILIENCY AWARDS

Action Inc.

Bowditch & Dewey, LLP

Catholic Charities

Community Networks Corporation

Community Software Group

Rachel Collins

Cornerstone Bank

Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts

Edward Street Child Services

Friendly House, Inc.

Mass General Brigham Health Plan

Mutual of America

National Grid

Polar Beverages

Robert Scherer

South Middlesex Opportunity Council

Southeast Asian Coalition of Central MA

UMass Memorial Health Care, Inc.

UniBank

Webster Five

Worcester Business Development Corporation

Jenna Wills



IN MEMORIAM

On August 17, 2023, WCAC unexpectedly lost a dear friend, long-time Board Member, and passionate Head Start advocate **Steven M. Desmarais**. Steve served as Treasurer, was a member of the agency's Audit/Finance Committee, and was very active in WCAC's financial activities.

To honor Steve's tremendous service to WCAC, his passion for our early education and care programs, we are dedicating this annual report to him and his tireless work to support early education and care programs. WCAC will dedicate the new Parent Center at our Southbridge location in his name and will name our annual early education Resiliency Award to the Steven M. Desmarais Champion for Kids award.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and wish to express our heartfelt appreciation for his many, many years of volunteerism and support of WCAC and the vulnerable households we serve. May he rest in peace.



FY2023

Financials

SOURCES OF FUNDS

with In-kind

MA Executive Office of Housing & Livable Communities Pass Thru, Federal & State	\$22,843,134
Earned Revenue Fees	8,101,640
City of Worcester – Pass Thru Fed & State	3,737,332
Federal Funding – Head Start	3,483,335
State Revenues – Other	1,622,786
Corporate, Foundation & Private Grants	844,700
GWCF Pass Thru State Funds for Undocumented Relief	619,429
United Way	503,681
In-Kind Contributions	476,725
Mass. Dept. of Early Education & Care	413,827
The Children's Trust Fund	307,671
Federal Funding – Other Pass Thru	285,425
Mass. Dept. of Education	190,937
Mass. Dept of Public Health	87,475
Other Income	34,484
Individual Donations	16,202

TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS

\$43,568,783

USE OF FUNDS

with In-kind

Fuel Assistance	\$21,643,207
Weatherization/Energy Conservation	8,808,290
Head Start	4,357,888
Job & Education Center	4,064,780
Resiliency Center	1,294,008
Community Services Block Grant	964,208
Healthy Families	396,397
Fundraising	118,336
Other Admin	241,738
Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester **	314,220

** WCAC serves as fiscal intermediary for CHGW

TOTAL USE OF FUNDS

\$42,203,072



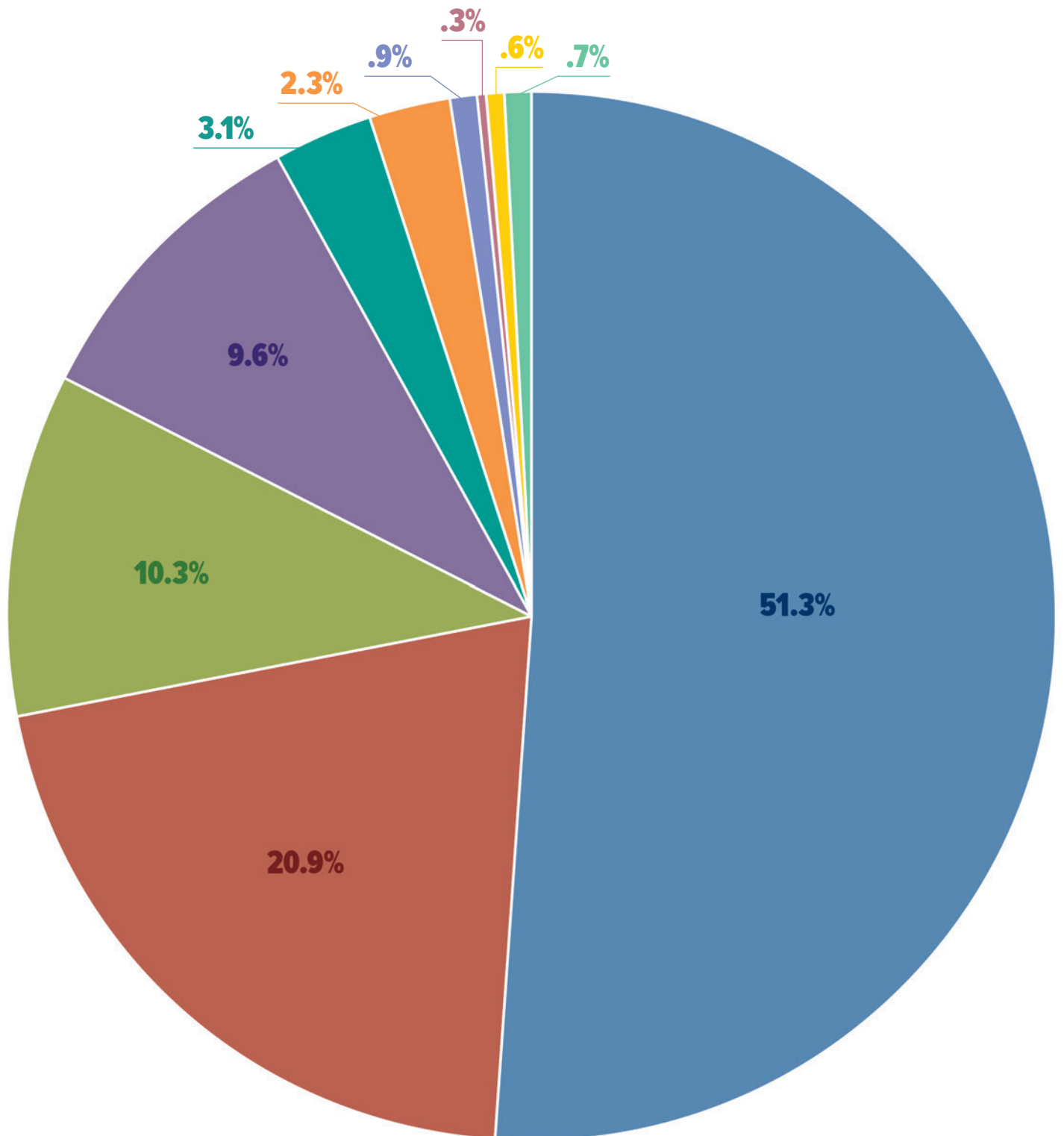
**SERVING THE CITY
OF WORCESTER
AND 45
NEIGHBORING
COMMUNITIES:**

Auburn, Blackstone, Boylston, Brimfield, Brookfield, Charlton, Clinton, Douglas, Dudley, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holden, Holland, Hopedale, Hubbardston, Grafton, Leicester, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, Monson, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Northborough, Northbridge, Palmer, Oakham, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Shrewsbury, Southbridge, Spencer, Sterling, Sturbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, Wales, Warren, Webster, West Boylston, West Brookfield, and Westborough.

**Unaudited Financial Statement. WCAC's fiscal year is October 1 to September 30.*

FY2023

Use of Funds





WCAC

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY ONE NEIGHBOR AT A TIME

THE ANTIPOVERTY AGENCY
FOR CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS



Worcester Community Action Council, Inc.

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Worcester, MA 01608

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www.wcac.net