

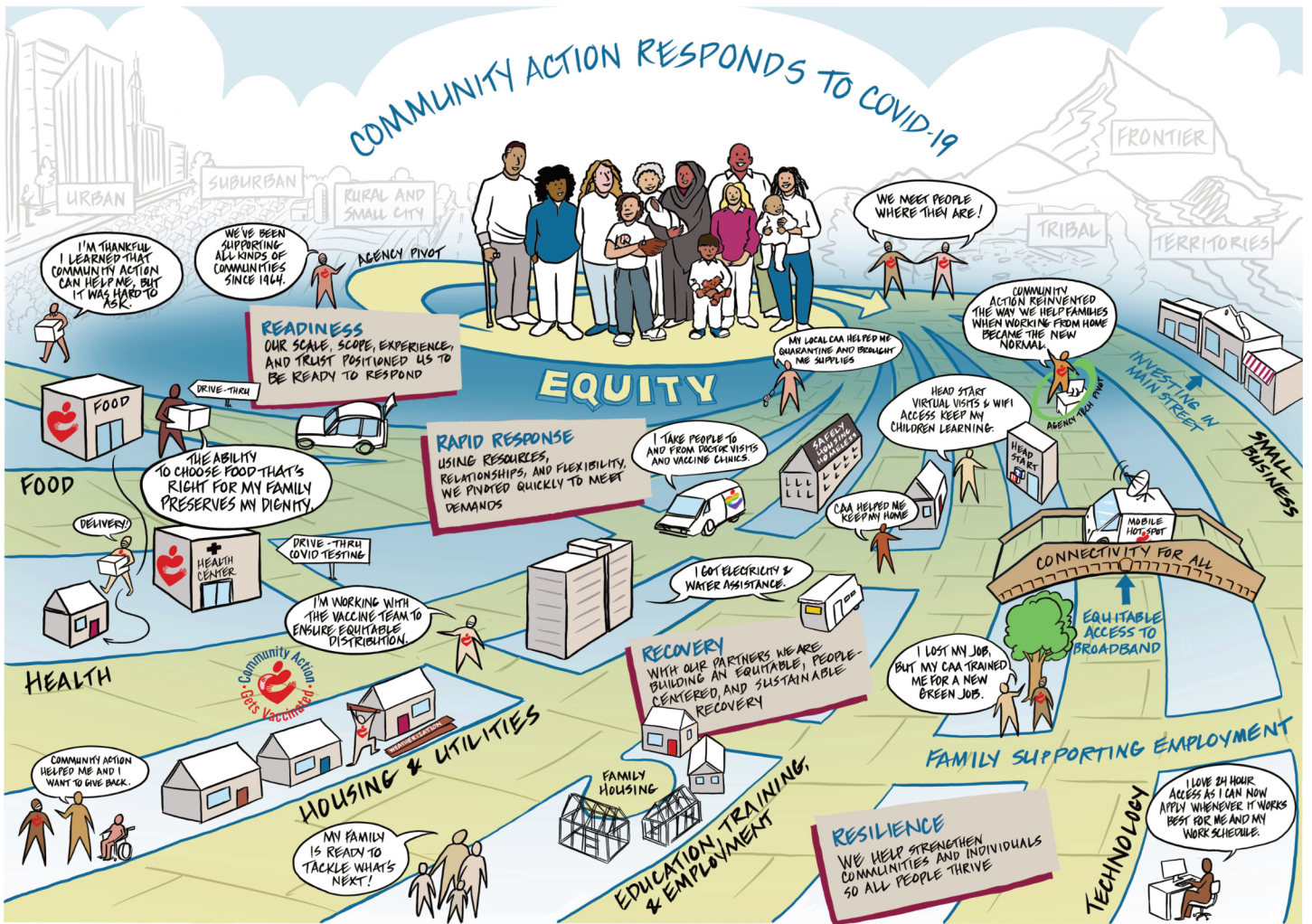
READINESS RAPID RESPONSE RECOVERY RESILIENCE



APRIL 1, 2020 - MARCH 31, 2021

How the Community Action Network is Responding to COVID-19





Introduction

The Community Action Network's response to COVID-19 is impressive and unsurprising. Community Action leveraged a nationwide network of 1,000+ local Agencies, deep-seated state and federal partnerships, a wide breadth of social services and programs, and almost 60 years of experience fighting poverty to help communities recover from the pandemic.

As the pandemic evolves, Community Action strives to build a more equitable and prosperous future for families experiencing poverty. Community Action embraces calls to "build back better" and reimagine the systems and programs that give everyone an opportunity to thrive.

This report details how Community Action was ready to act, responded rapidly, helped families recover from crisis and is building community resilience for the future.

Key Components of Our Response to COVID-19

READINESS

Our scale, scope and experience positioned us to respond quickly.

RAPID RESPONSE

Using resources, relationships and flexibility, we pivoted quickly to meet demands.

RECOVERY

With our partners, we're building an equitable, people-centered and sustainable recovery.

RESILIENCE

We help strengthen communities and individuals so all people thrive.

Readiness

Scale & Scope

Every day Community Action's infrastructure and resources (funding, staff, facilities, systems, partners) make it possible to serve millions of Americans of all ages living on low or moderate incomes in all areas of the country - frontier, rural, suburban, and urban.



Our Experience

With almost sixty years of experience delivering services and building relationships, Community Action excels at addressing the causes and conditions of poverty and responding to needs during economic downturns, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

Community Action Manages An Impressive Range of Programs & Initiatives

The depth and breadth of Community Action programs helps us address crises and community needs quickly and deeply.

Resources for New Parents After School Programs
Affordable Housing **Food Pantries**
Rental Assistance Career Counseling
Head Start Child Care Homeless Services
Health Services **Utility Assistance**
Disaster Relief Small Business Loans
Home Weatherization

Trust, Confidence, & Partnerships

Communities, individuals, and local organizations have a high level of trust and confidence in their local Community Action Agency (CAA), demonstrated by their engagement with, and support of our programs and services every day.

The below data exemplifies our steadfast role in the communities we serve and our ability to address challenges like COVID-19 in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner. In partnership with local organizations and a legion of committed volunteers, Community Action impacts communities across America every day.



400,000,000

volunteer hours donated to local Agencies every year

\$1 billion

estimated value of volunteer hours every year

15 million

people served by Community Action every year

20,000

local organizations Agencies partner with every year

Rapid Response

An Agile Pivot

Without missing a beat, Community Action rapidly adapted its service delivery systems, pursued new virtual strategies, scaled up basic needs services, supported continuity of education and training, and responded to an array of local needs.

Local Community Action Agencies immediately responded to the emergency needs of their communities while observing the most reliable public health guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic.



For example, Agencies switched from congregate meal sites to home delivery, and even implemented home delivery of diapers and other supplies for parents. Agencies also developed 24/7 internet application systems - a more convenient and flexible option that also allowed for social distancing.

Timely Identification of Needs

Community Action quickly assessed the emerging needs of communities and people brought on by the pandemic. As challenges evolved, Community Action sought new insight. Across the country, Agencies updated their community needs assessments to identify unmet needs of people experiencing economic insecurity.

The Community Action Partnership supported and coordinated these efforts. The CARES Project, a new team assembled by the Partnership, gathered information about Agencies' responses to COVID-19, implemented new programs, and established weekly calls for the entire network to keep everyone informed.

“When you have nothing, you are told that ‘beggars can’t be choosers.’ [Our program] has helped to change the narrative. The community is saying ‘No, you are deserving. You have dignity and should have choice in food.’”

- Community Action meal distribution program partner



CASE STUDY

Fighting Hunger With Meal Distribution

In New York, **Cattaraugus Community Action** helped deliver thousands of donated meals from local restaurants to make sure all their neighbors had access to quality, nutritious food. The Agency's meal distribution program delivered **more than 30,000 donated meals** to help keep people fed in the face of food insecurity wrought by COVID-19.

Partnerships & Expanded Resources

Whether building on existing relationships or forming new ones, Community Action has been instrumental in leading collaborations at all levels so people have access to the resources and supports their families need to survive the economic, social, and health challenges of the pandemic. Community Action relationships have expanded over the last year, resulting in new local, state, and federal financial and non-financial resources.

Recovery

Diverse Cross-Sector Stakeholder Engagement

Equitable recovery requires the participation of diverse cross-sector stakeholders. Community Action engages customers and partners in the planning, design, decision-making, and implementation of recovery activities.

The Community Action Partnership gathers information from the national Community Action network to help local Agencies across the United States recover from the pandemic. The Partnership also uses this data to evaluate the network's response and to improve collaborative efforts in the future.



Equitable, People-Centered, & Sustainable Recovery

Local circumstances defy cookie-cutter approaches and instead necessitate tailored responses that transform systems and create a more equitable, people-centered, and sustainable society. Community Action believes in rebuilding and redesigning systems that work for everyone in America.



\$700,000,000+
in rental assistance
distributed nationwide
by Community Action

A Unified National Vaccination Campaign

The Community Action Partnership is planning, coordinating, and executing a national vaccine advocacy campaign, leveraging our network of 1,000 local Agencies to reach communities across America and help achieve equitable access to vaccines.



Click to Watch: Community Action Leaders Promote Vaccination in Video



CASE STUDY

Striving to Achieve Equitable Access to the COVID-19 Vaccine

As COVID-19 vaccines became more accessible across the nation, the need for equitable access became increasingly clear. Community Action Agencies stepped in to help. Greater Bergen Community Action helped their local health center develop a strategy to reach communities of color left behind during vaccine rollout. The group reserved appointments for Black and Brown residents of Bergen County, organized public vaccinations for community leaders to demonstrate confidence in vaccines, and offered vaccine education.



Resilience

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

Commitment To Building Equity

Community Action knows that racism rests at the root of American poverty, and that equity can only be built and sustained by centering ourselves in this truth and addressing it every day.

The Community Action Partnership Board of Directors has declared racism a public health crisis, and in 2020 established a National Equity and Economic Mobility Commission.

Strengthening Capabilities For Community Resilience

Community Action, its customers, and its partners all play a role in strengthening a wide range of capacities that impact resilience and serve to protect people and places from future shocks.

Critical assets, facilities, and services within the public health, emergency management, health care, human services, mental health, behavioral health, and environmental health sectors can lessen the severity or impact of traumas and future shocks for all of us, and are especially important for protecting those at higher risk—people of color, seniors, children, and the homeless, for example.



100%

of 2,411 webinar attendees agreed that the content was “relevant and timely”

New Training Informed By COVID-19

The Community Action Partnership is developing a vast array of playbooks, toolkits, and webinars to equip Agencies with strategies, skills, and opportunities to increase readiness and resilience in the future. As evident above, the Partnership has had incredible success engaging the network with these new resources, even amid the challenges of a socially-distanced world.

Community Action Cohorts

The Community Action Partnership gathers stakeholders to share knowledge, shape national strategy, and strengthen ties between the national Partnership and our 1,000+ Agencies nationwide. The **Data Ambassadors Cohort** focuses on enhancing organizational data management abilities throughout the network. **The Peer to Peer Cohort** provides customized coaching and technical assistance to local Agency leaders grappling with the effects of COVID-19. **The State Association Think Tank** develops a robust action plan to increase collaboration across the entire network. Members of the **Customer Cohort** advise us on what their families and communities need most.

1
Data Ambassadors Cohort

2
Peer to Peer Cohort

Our Community Action Cohorts

3
State Association Think Tank

4
Customer Cohort

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.

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