

2015 CRT Community Action Plan Report

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

The Community Action Plan (CAP) Report is a requirement of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) statute in order for the Community Renewal Team (CRT), a community action agency (CAA), to receive CSBG funds. In Connecticut, the State Department of Social Services (CT DSS) coordinates the receipt of all CAP Report submissions from the CAAs throughout the state. As prescribed in the CT CSBG Community Action Plan Update Guidelines for FY 2014, 2015, and 2016, the CRT 2015 CAP Report includes the following seven sections:

1. Section A – Contact Information
2. Section B – Description of Agency Service Delivery System
3. Section C – Needs Assessment Update
4. Section D – Meeting Needs
5. Section E – Innovation
6. Section F – Linkages/Coordination of Funding
7. Section G – Performance Measurement

The 2015 CAP Report provides updates to the following: social, economic, health, and demographic conditions within CRT's 40-town service area; changes in the community's needs, if any; progress or changes to programs or initiatives; data system capacity; and organizational structure.

When pragmatically applied, the CRT CAP Report is an essential learning and planning tool used by agency leadership and program staff to develop the agency's strategic plan, guide program and service delivery development, and inform key stakeholders and community members about the 40-town area CRT serves.

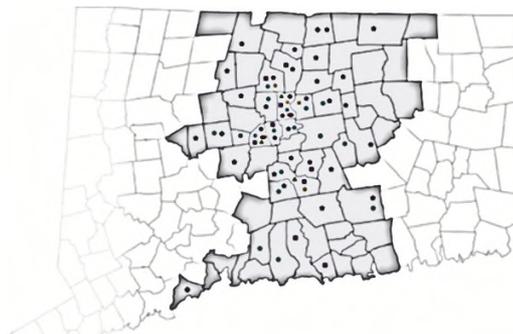
SERVICE AREA

CRT's congressionally assigned service delivery area includes 40 of Connecticut's 169 towns, and

stretches from the Long Island Sound to the Massachusetts border. CRT makes every effort to ensure service accessibility to residents in need throughout the agency's 40-town service area. The 40-town service area is located within three of Connecticut's eight counties – Hartford, Middlesex, and New Haven. Listed below are the 40 towns grouped by county. The residents of Hartford County continue to receive the largest concentrations of services followed by Middlesex County residents.

Hartford County: Avon, Bloomfield, Canton, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Enfield, Glastonbury, Granby, Hartford, Manchester, Marlborough, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, South Windsor, Suffield, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor and Windsor Locks.

Middlesex County: Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Saybrook, Portland, and Westbrook.



New Haven County: Branford, Guilford, Madison, and North Branford.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

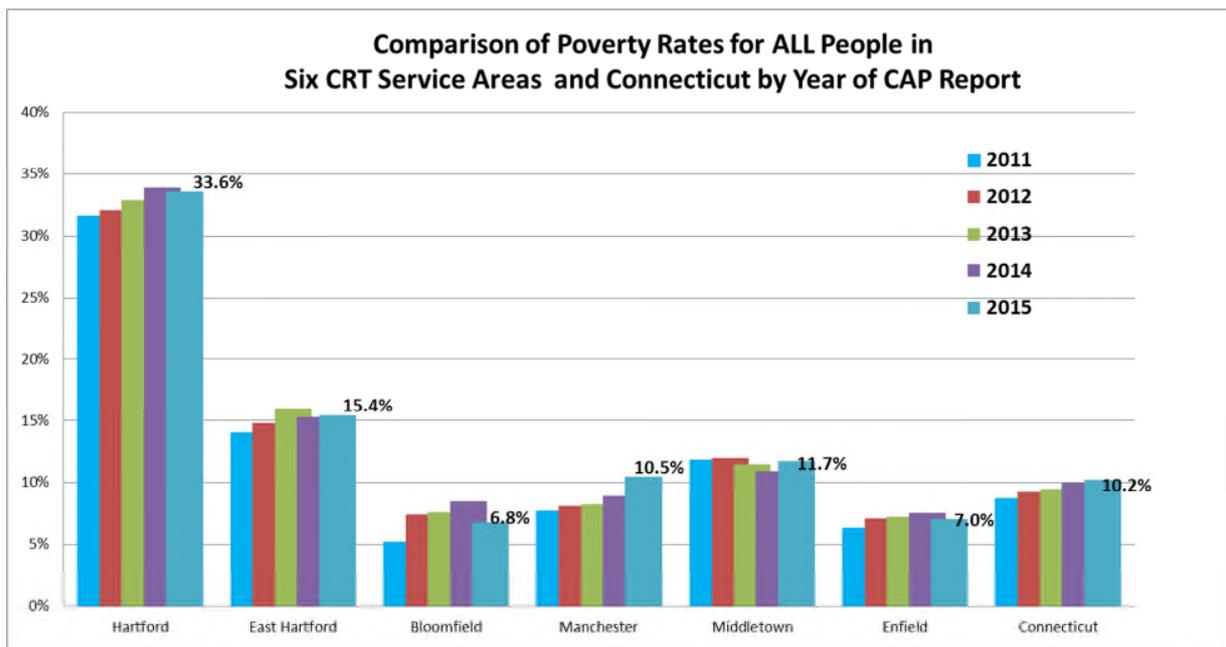
Methodology: To meet the requirements outlined in the 2015 CAP Update Guidance and to ensure a thorough assessment of community

need, CRT obtained and analyzed data from agency-based, local, statewide, and national data sources. The demographic, social, economic, and public health indicators for CRT’s service areas were collected from federal, state, and local databases and reports including the U.S. Census American Community Survey, State of Connecticut Departments of Children and Families (DCF), Education (SDE), Public Health (DPH), Social Services (DSS), Department of Labor (DOL), State Police, among others. CRT also relied on program data gathered for the Community Services Block Grant Systems Survey (CSBG-IS) report, program surveys, and evaluation forms to improve and tailor service delivery, develop new programs, and determine program participants’ needs. For the 2015 Executive Summary, purposefully selected demographics and poverty indicators are shared. Additional data from each of CRT’s 40-town service area can be found in the full report.

Population Description: CRT continues to touch the lives of over 100,000 individuals each year. According to the 2014 CSBG-IS report, CRT provided one or more services to 114,223 individuals from 43,264 families. (CRT CSBG-IS, 2014). The number of individuals decreased by 340 compared with the 2014 CAP Report. CRT program participants continue to be racially

diverse with Blacks representing 31% of program participants, multi-racial 30%, and White 26%. All percentages are similar to those reported in the 2014 CAP Report. A decrease was noted among Hispanic or Latino participants, 28% this year compared with 31% last year. Program participants were mostly female, 58% compared with 42% male, and among Connecticut’s most vulnerable citizens – children, seniors, the impoverished, and single parents.

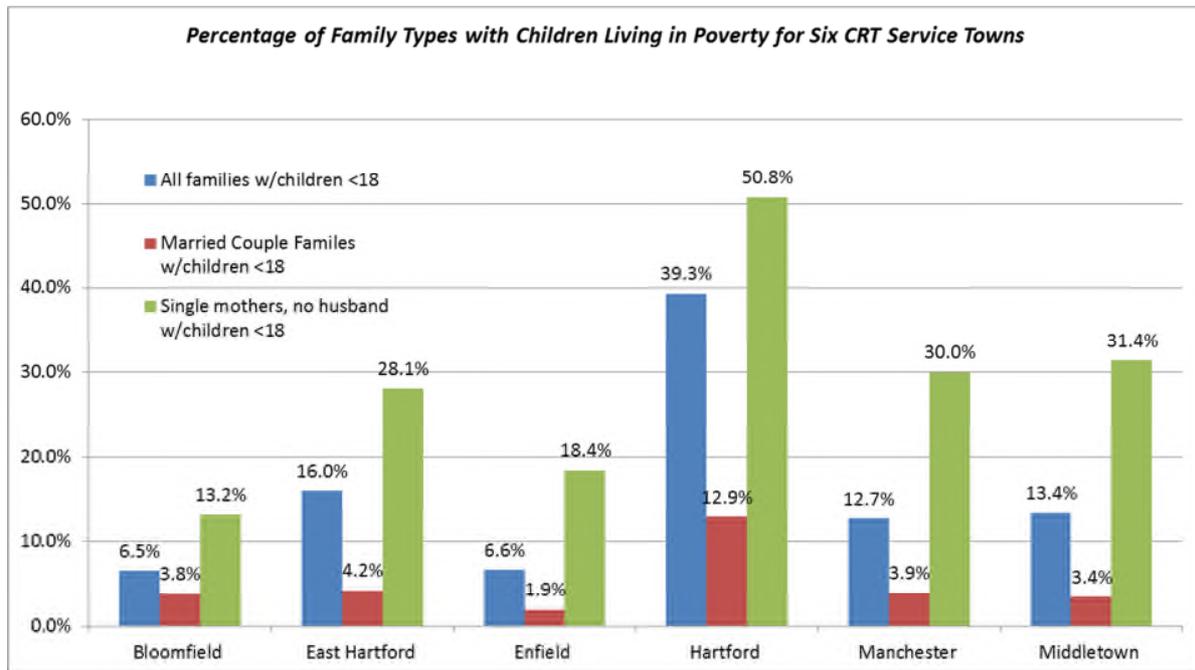
Poverty: The bar graph below examines the poverty rates over the last five years in the six CRT service towns. Connecticut’s poverty rate has continued to increase over the last five years, growing slightly each year. While Hartford’s poverty rate remains higher than other towns, the bar graph below demonstrates that Manchester is outpacing the other five towns in poverty. The rate for Middletown, on average, has remained about the same over the past five years. Enfield and Bloomfield’s rates appear to be returning to the 2011 rate, and hopefully, will continue to return to pre-recession rates. Although small (0.3%), any reduction in Hartford’s poverty rate offers promise; however, rates among specific populations must be considered, i.e. children, single mothers, etc.



U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013, Table DP03

The bar graph below displays the percentage of families with children younger than 18 years of age living below the poverty level in the six service towns where CRT has the largest

presence. Again, married couples with children living in these six towns are less likely to live in poverty than single mothers with children.



U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2009-2013, Table DP03

Throughout the six selected CRT service areas – Bloomfield, East Hartford, Enfield, Hartford, Manchester, and Middletown – greater percentages of Hispanic families live below the poverty level compared with their Black, White, and Asian counterparts. Bloomfield is the only exception, where Asians have the highest percentage at 17.7. Of course, the numbers of individuals in each racial or ethnic category differ from town to town, but understanding which racial and ethnic groups are most likely to be living in poverty is necessary to better understand who needs services, develop outreach/marketing strategies, and determine whether or not CRT is reaching those most in need.

Poverty rates in many of the towns increase among children, and typically children under five

years of age suffer the highest rates of poverty. Over 51% of related children less than 5 years of age live in poverty in Hartford, and in East Haddam, the percentage is 32.4%. East Hartford's rate of 29.1% is also high. Marlborough, Deep River, and Killingworth have no children living in poverty.

Income: There is great disparity in income between CRTs 40 towns. As an example, the median income for a family with children in West Hartford is \$110,226, while in Hartford the median income for the same is \$33,756 (ACS, 2009-2013). A complete median income table by town is available in the full CAP Report.

Seniors (65 years+): Connecticut is one of only seven states with a median age over 40. The older population will grow rapidly over the

next fifteen years with the most rapid increase being between now and 2030 when the baby boom generation reaches age 65. In the report put out by the Connecticut Office of Legislative Research in December 2012, the proportion of Connecticut residents over 65 will increase to 21.5% by 2030 compared with the current 14.5% (ACS, 2009-2013).

Seniors make-up 20% or more of the total population in seven CRT towns – Old Saybrook (28.3%), Essex (25.4%), Bloomfield (23.4%), Chester (21.6%), Wethersfield (20.7%), Branford (20.4%), and Madison (20.4%). Hartford, with a senior population of 9.7%, is the only town in CRT's service area where seniors make up less than 10% of the population.

According to the U.S. Census (ACS, 2009-13), 6.9% of Connecticut's residents 65 years of age and over live in poverty. Hartford's percentage of seniors living in poverty (22.6%) is much greater than any other CRT town, and 3.3 times greater than the state. Rocky Hill has the second largest percentage of seniors living in poverty with 11.4% followed by East Hartford at 9.7%.

Grandparenting: In the U.S. there are 7,023,620 grandparents who lived with grandchildren younger than age 18 of which 2,773,807 (ACS 2009-2013) are responsible for their own grandchildren. Thirty-eight percent of these grandparents have been parenting their grandchildren for 5 years or more.

Connecticut reported that there are 67,119 grandparents living with one or more grandchildren less than 18 years of age, about 1,000 more compared with the last CAP Report. Within this grandparent population, 21,458 have the responsibility for their own grandchildren (ACS 2009-2013).

Despite Hartford's low elderly population, 3,738 grandparents lived with one or more of their own grandchildren, and of those grandparents, 1,754 (48%) are the children's primary caregivers (U.S. Census, ACS 2009-13). This year, all of the towns except Manchester have higher percentages compared with the state. East Hartford's percentage is the highest followed by Hartford.

MOVING FORWARD

The 2015 CAP Report provides an update of the demographic, socio-economic, and social conditions with CRT's 40-town service region, paying particular attention to the low- and moderate-income individuals and families. Within CRT's area of geographic focus there is diversity of people, conditions, and need. CRT has the challenge of setting priorities globally to address a 40-town geographic service area then determining strategic approaches to address priorities within each community. The data make it clear that the current agency programming is relevant to the existing needs; however, there are notable shifts and changes in the data that CRT must recognize and respond to over the next three years. Priorities from the data are listed below and must be an essential part of CRT's strategic plan.

First, the senior population (65 years and older) is growing throughout Connecticut, and in the majority of CRT towns. In Middlesex County, the senior population of many towns is approaching or exceeding 20%. Old Saybrook's population is 28.3% seniors, and Essex 25.4%. Concentrated outreach efforts about current services and additional needs to older adults from CRT's Middletown Service Center are becoming priorities. In the strategic plan, program planning and outreach strategies for the towns in Middlesex County need to include a senior component when relevant.

Second, higher percentages of grandparents are raising their own grandchildren for extended periods of time, and this year numbers increased in the towns surrounding Hartford. CRT has learned that grandparents achieve stability and self-sufficiency when they are able to access a multitude of supports – behavioral health, financial literacy, nutrition assistance, respite, etc. CRT’s Steps to Success (STS) identifies family strengths and builds on community-based relationships to reinforce and support positive changes that will have a long-term impact on these families’ lives. It is time to strategize how to apply the expertise learned from STS and the Generations program to expand outside of the city of Hartford and address the needs of grandparents raising their grandchildren in other towns.

Third, single mothers with children, particularly moms with children five years of age and younger, continue to live in poverty at alarming high rates. Sharp increases are noted in towns once thought to be poverty free. While single fathers also are impacted, they are not struggling financially as much as single mothers with young children. Designing an approach that works to increase the income for single mothers is critical to moving two generations out of poverty. The upcoming strategic plan should include a two-generation strategy specifically for this population.

Fourth, while poverty is still concentrated in Hartford at much higher rates than other towns throughout CRT’s service area, the data is changing. Towns once thought not to be “in need,” are slowly beginning to show the indications that needs are growing. Two areas in particular are Manchester, Hartford County and East Haddam, Middlesex County. In Manchester, the population is growing, the number of children is rising, demographic and socio-

economic indicators are shifting, and the poverty rate is increasing. This year 57% of school-aged children qualified for free or reduced school lunch. An in-depth discussion during the next strategic planning process should include the exploration of how to best serve Manchester. East Haddam also shows poverty growth in specific pockets of its population. More research should be done with residents, town officials, and community organizations to further investigate the needs of this small town.

Fifth, the data demonstrate the need to improve educational attainment in Hartford among adults 25 years of age and older. CRT should continue to deliver high quality workforce training programs and strengthen its partnerships with adult education programs and institutes of higher education throughout its service area. Additionally, program staff members should provide assistance enrolling more CRT program participants in adult education to complete their high school education and monitor success.

Sixth, marketing strategies need to be reviewed and cross-referenced with demographic data to determine the efficacy of the materials. For example, there has been an increase in the different Asian populations in Rocky Hill and South Windsor. A review of service materials for culturally appropriate and linguistically accurate descriptions of services, discussions with key informants, and targeted outreach strategies will help engage the growing Asian populations to address any human service needs. This type of material review is only a tweak to the solid integrated marketing goals and objectives included in the strategic plan.

Finally, the education system landscape is shifting dramatically, particularly for preschool

age children, and CRT is primed and ready to respond. The CT Early Childhood Alliance reports a continuing shortage of childcare spaces for infants and toddlers, and increasing competition for three and four-year old students to fill classrooms in public and magnet schools. This year, CRT had to complete the Designation Renewal System application process for its Head Start program. Using the direction of new preschool legislation passed in Connecticut and data from the CRT, CT SDE, and CT DPH, CRT will offer Early Head Start services in Hartford and East Hartford to 90 children and families and 10 pregnant women residing in Hartford County. This is the very first time Early Head Start will be offered in the Hartford area. In addition to Early Head Start, CRT will serve 557 Head Start children and families in Hartford County and 89 Head Start children and families in Middlesex County, Connecticut. All services will be center-based, with a minimum of seven hours per day and a minimum of 36 weeks offered to all children. Two hundred and eighty-eight Head Start and 90 Early Head Start children and families will have services for 8 to 10 hours per day for 52 weeks through a blending of various state and federal funding streams.

For more information:

Krista Heybruck-Santiago
CRT Director of Research
860-560-5683
heybruckk@crtct.org

