

2016 Community Action Month

# toolkit

**Community Action Month**

• **May 2016** •

#BeCommunityAction

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**Send us your Community Action Month stories!** Please send copies of Proclamations, press releases, pictures, videos, etc. to Joi Ridley, Director of Communications, at [jridley@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:jridley@communityactionpartnership.com)

# Welcome



Welcome to Community Action Month 2016!

Community Action Month marks a commemoration of family and community achievements, as well as an opportunity to spotlight the great work done by Community Action Agencies all year long.

This Community Action Month Toolkit provides CAAs, State Associations, and State CSBG Offices with tools, resources, inspiration, and suggested activities to help the Network coordinate efforts and highlight the great work going on across the US.

This May, we ask that you **#BeCommunityAction**. Every day you are the embodiment of the Promise of Community Action as you turn hope into reality for families and communities. Every day you help create pathways to job opportunities, early childhood education, safe and affordable housing, and more. This Community Action Month, tout your impact and tell the stories of the families and communities you serve.

We look forward to seeing how inventive the Network can be during this year's Community Action Month. We anticipate pictures, volunteer days, infographics, Facebook posts, tweets, and Instagram pics from across the country. We hope that you will celebrate board members, share community success stories, and honor the work of your CAA.

You are part of a national commitment to helping people and changing lives. The Partnership looks forward to celebrating this commitment with you. Let's continue to **#BeCommunityAction!**

Denise Harlow, CCAP  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Community Action Partnership

# About the Toolkit



This toolkit is designed to help showcase your CAA's impact, dedication, and role in the community. It provides tools and ideas on how to spotlight the ways help people with low incomes move out of poverty and into economic stability. We encourage you to tell your CAA's story as much as possible throughout the year. May is a chance for the entire Community Action Network to do it together.

Write a blog, tweet, and Facebook post about your CAA's outstanding program participants. Upload photos and infographics to Pinterest and Instagram showing your staff and volunteers in action. Address the issue of poverty in an op-ed in your local newspaper. Share why it's important to help your community's most vulnerable citizens with food, housing, job training, and childcare assistance. Distribute a press release documenting the results of Head Start, Weatherization, and the Earned Income Tax Credit on families in your community.

Connect your local activities to the national effort by using the hashtag **#BeCommunityAction**. We want to know how you commemorate National Community Action Month. By using **#BeCommunityAction** when posting/sharing on social media, we can connect efforts across the country.

The work of Community Action is unique for each community, given their local needs and resources. The Promise of Community Action binds us together as a national network of change.

Thank you for all you do!

# Getting Started

## Know What You Want to Talk About

Community Action has so many stories to tell at the local and state level. Does your CAA want to focus on telling the story of poverty in your community? Take a look at [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) for a quick review of your state's counties and visit the Partnership's [Needs Assessment Tool](#) to grab local, state, and national numbers. Do you want to talk about customer success? Talk with staff to find families willing to share their stories. Pumped up about your volunteers and board members? Gifts of time and talent are vital to Community Action's success!

## Know Your Audience

Decide who you want to hear your message. Try researching and using the platform your target audience uses most and develop an approach that speaks to that audience. You can start with who you know. Explore your agency's existing relationships and develop target materials for each audience including the general public, the press, customers, policy makers, etc.

## Collaborate

It's more fun when we're all working together! Use the toolkits and hashtags the Partnership provides to connect with CAAs across the US. Let your local partners know what you're doing and ask them to engage. Connect with other CAAs and organizations in your region to increase shared impact. Host a town hall style meeting and invite media, officials, and consumers to let the impact speak for itself.

## Plan and Promote

Plan to secure venues, prepare info & promote Community Action Month. We have 31 days to engage with audiences!

## Be Visual and Tell Stories

Stories, photos, videos, and infographics are a great way to engage your audience. Share the success stories of families who have worked with your CAA. Grab your phone, take some pictures, film some videos and post!

## Wrap Up

Thank everyone who supported, shared, and participated in Community Action Month. Share results and consider your return on investment.

# 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.



# Community Action Month: In Action

**Community Action is in it for the long haul!** Since 1964, Community Action has advocated for those who don't have a voice. For more than 50 years, Community Action has provided much needed services and opportunities to millions of individuals and families with low incomes.



Be proactive about sharing the successes of the individuals and families that leverage Community Action to move out of poverty and toward economic security.

**Helping People ~ Changing Lives!** Community Action leverages programs, services, public/private resources, volunteers, board members, and experienced staff to impact communities from coast to coast. Share your results!





# Key Dates

## Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> – #MissionMoment Monday

Mission moments are short, inspirational examples of your work that put a face on what you do. They are stories and examples that give visibility to your organization's projects. This builds awareness for your work and enables you to attract volunteer and donor prospects. Sharing these mission moments can be the most powerful way to shift a hesitant supporter into a strong advocate. Help us begin #BeCommunityAction on May 2<sup>nd</sup> by sharing your #MissionMoment!



### Twitter:

What does #CommunityAction mean to you? Ask staff and board to post their answer using #MissionMoment #TalkPoverty. Use the poster in the Toolkit appendix to have staff and volunteer post selfies.

### Facebook:

“Our agency has improved the lives of others since [insert year you began]. What does #CommunityAction mean to **you**? #MissionMoment #BeCommunityAction” [insert photos to accompany your stories]

## Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> – #Transition Tuesday – Success Stories

Highlight customer success stories! Work with your families to post stories that show the impact of Community Action. Add #CommunityActionWorks to your posts. Consider having families tell their story on video and share on your website and Facebook feed. Use today to submit nominations to the Partnership for the Sargent Shriver Award for customer success!

## Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> – #FellowshipFriday – #TwitterChat with the Partnership CEO

Join a TwitterChat with Community Action Partnership CEO Denise Harlow at 2:00 ET/1:00 CT/12:00 MT/11:00 PT to discuss Community Action history, poverty today, why Community Action works, impact of performance management changes, CCAP, and other current issues.

### Twitter:

Post your questions and comments via twitter using #BeCommunityAction on May 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 ET and Denise will answer questions live.



# Key Dates, cont.

## **Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup> – #TransformationTuesday – Community Service Day**

Use this day to celebrate your longstanding commitment to Community Action! Offer your time and talent to your community – participate in a local park cleanup, organize a group bike ride, volunteer at a food bank, etc.

### **Twitter:**

.#CommunityAction is all about helping people & changing lives. Our group, **[insert agency name/Twitter handle]**, participated in #TransformationTuesday!

### **Facebook:**

Our Community Action Agency is joining the Community Action Network for a #TransformationTuesday national day of service. Just like us, these agencies empower families and transform communities every day!

#CommunityActionWorks #BeCommunityAction **[Insert photos from your community service day activity, wearing your shirts or stickers].**

#CommunityAction has been taking part in #TransformationTuesday since 1964, transforming people's lives and communities. Today we go #BackToOurRoots and into our community for #CommunityServiceDay!

## **Share your work with the Partnership!**

Be sure to share your photos on your agency's social media outlets, with your community media, and with Joi Ridley, Director of Communications, at [jridley@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:jridley@communityactionpartnership.com).

# Community Action Month Calendar

## Community Action Month May 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Community Action Month begins Post selfie with huggy heart and post on twitter <b>1</b>	#missionmoment monday Team discussion on what Community Action means to your community  <b>2</b>	National Teachers Day Thank your Head Start /EHS teachers today <b>3</b>	#WelcomeWed Host an open house for your CAA – invite neighbors, partners and media <b>4</b>	#Thankful Thursday Host staff appreciation lunch <b>5</b>	#FlashbackFriday Post pictures of your original Board of Directors <b>6</b>	#SportsSaturday Take a field trip to a local baseball game wearing a Community Action T-shirt! <b>7</b>
#MothersDay <b>8</b>	#Motivation Monday Recite the Community Action Promise at your staff meeting <b>9</b>	#Transformation Tuesday Post success stories on your website and your social media feeds  <b>10</b>	#WeCare Wednesday Invite local elected officials for a site visit. #TalkPoverty <b>11</b>	International Nurses Day Thank any nurses you have on staff and those participating in your programs <b>12</b>	#FlashbackFriday Post pictures of your agency from the 60s, 70s, and 80s <b>13</b>	May is older Americans Month Highlight your programs for seniors with a local TV station <b>14</b>
Host a Community Cleanup Day <b>15</b>	#MotivationMonday Record video of your staff chanting "Community Action: Helping People, Changing Lives!" <b>16</b>	#Transformation Tuesday Host a Poverty Simulation <b>17</b>	#Weatherization Wednesday Post before and after pictures of a recent weatherization project <b>18</b>	#TrainingThursday Make plans to register for the Partnership Convention—Early Bird rates end May 27! <b>19</b>	#FlashbackFriday Post elementary school pictures of your staff  <b>20</b>	Armed Forces Day Thank you to all your veterans on staff <b>21</b>
Host a "Sleep Out" to raise awareness about homelessness <b>22</b>	#MotivationMonday Lead a team discussion on your CAAs mission statement <b>23</b>	#Transformation Tuesday Have staff and board participate in a Community Service Day activity  <b>24</b>	#WeCare Wednesday Head Start kids color the huggy heart and post on social media <b>25</b>	#Thankful Thursday Thank your volunteers and your board members <b>26</b>	#FoodFocusFriday Post pictures of Meals on Wheels, Community Gardens, Food Pantries . . . <b>27</b>	#TalkPoverty Post key stats and stories from your agency on Facebook <b>28</b>
 <b>29</b>	#Memorial Day Highlight Veterans on social media <b>30</b>	#Transformation Tuesday Post success stories on your website and your social media feeds <b>31</b>				

# Media Outreach

## Key Steps in Media Outreach

- Use Social Media to get the word out about all of your Community Action Month activities using **#BeCommunityAction** and tag @CAPartnership in tweets and Facebook posts.
- Prepare and distribute news releases announcing events, activities, awards and other topics associated with your National Community Action Month commemorations.
- Ask your CAA's public relations/communications staff person or other designated employee to serve as the media liaison, answer reporters' calls and inquiries, and follow up after news releases are disseminated.
- Assemble information packets/kits containing a news release on your event, brochures, and general information about your CAA, examples of your CAA's success stories and current local poverty statistics.
- Write letters to the editor and send them to your local newspapers. Discuss how your CAA is addressing poverty-related issues in your community and why Community Action is critical to helping people escape poverty and achieving economic stability.

## SAMPLE RESS RELEASE

Use to announce and promote Community Action Month events. This template can be customized to best reflect messages your CAA wants to communicate and target audiences you want to reach. Feel free to develop additional news releases – focus on new CAA services, local poverty data, or recognition of staff, volunteers, and corporate/ community partners.

## SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Designed for elected officials to proclaim May "Community Action Month" in their jurisdictions. In the past, CAAs have adapted the sample proclamation with their local information and submitted it to their local officials for consideration. Procedures for submitting the proclamation should be available from the offices of your elected officials.

# Social Media Suggestions

## #MotivationMonday

- Record video of your staff saying “Community Action: Helping People, Changing Lives” and post it on social media using #BeCommunityAction.
- Email the Community Action Promise to all staff members.
- Recite the Community Action Promise at all May staff and board meetings.
- Ensure your CAA’s mission statement is visibly posted in your agency.
- Lead a team meeting on how your CAA’s mission ties to your work.

## #TransformationTuesday

- May 10<sup>th</sup>: post success stories.
- May 24<sup>th</sup>: participate in Community Service Day.
- Coordinate a community cleanup
- Post before/after photos of your Weatherization projects.
- Host a poverty simulation for your community.
- [PlaySpent](#) and tweet your experience.

## #WeCareWednesday

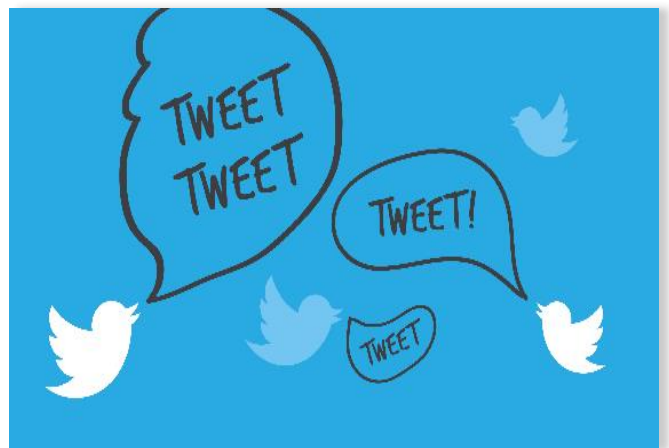
- Post action shots from your programs.
- Partner with a local health center for immunizations, health screenings, WIC enrollment, etc.
- Have your Head Start kids color pictures of the Huggy Heart. Post on social media.
- Invite your local legislators for a visit of your CAA site.

## #ThankfulThursday

- Have Head Start kids draw pictures for troops.
- Host staff appreciation day. Post selfies of your staff with #BeCommunityAction signs.
- Host a customer appreciation day.
- Thank volunteers or highlight VISTA work.
- Say thank you to your board by posting pictures with #BeCommunityAction.

## #FlashbackFriday

- Post pictures of your original board of directors.
- Post elementary school pictures of your staff.
- Post then/now pictures of Head Start alumni.
- Post agency pictures from the 1960s – 1980s.
- Read Community Action history and discuss at your agency. Tweet your thoughts.



**Note: For each week of Community Action Month, social media templates will be shared with the Network from national partners.**



# Activity Suggestions

## #FoodFocusFriday:

- Post pictures of your Meals on Wheels, Head Start lunches, SNAP enrollment, community gardens, food banks, etc.
- Make sure you are following @FRACTweets for the latest updates on food policy and advocacy using #SNAPMatters.

## #MemorialDay (May 30)

- Post pictures of staff members who are also veterans.
- Highlight SSVF programs.

## #TalkPoverty

- Share key data, statistics, and stories on social media using #talkpoverty.
- Share your annual report via Facebook using #CommunityActionWorks
- Share graphics from your Needs Assessment @CommunityCommon.

## #InternationalNursesDay (May 12)

- Find ways to thank any nurses you have on staff or in your programs.
- Share posts of HPOG (Health Profession Opportunity Grants) students.
- Share information on enrollment in the Affordable Care Act. See [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov) for information and use #InsureKidsNow.

## #WellnessWednesday

- Bring in a CPR instructor to train staff.
- Talk to case managers about the importance of self-care.
- Wear your Community Action t-shirt and take a walking tour of your community with your staff.

## #OlderAmericansMonth

- Host a game night or other event for seniors in your community.
- Host a multi-generational event.

## #EndHomelessness

- Have a “sleep out” to raise awareness about homelessness.
- Make sure you are following @NAEHomelessness for the latest resources for ending homelessness.
- Share your strategies to #EndVeteranHomelessness

## #NationalTeachersDay (May 3)

- Find ways to thank any teachers you have on staff or in your programs.
- Encourage staff to “teach what they know.”

## #FinCapWorks

- Engage in #FinCapWorks conversation online (tagging @CFED) to share your financial capability success stories.
- Share your budgeting tools.



# Community Action Month 2016

## Sample Press Release

*[insert your CAA logo here or print on agency letterhead]*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

*[insert date]*

### MEDIA CONTACT:

*[insert agency media contact's name,  
Phone number and email address]*

## Observing 52 Years of Community Action Service to *[insert your city/area]* Community

On August 20, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act which created a variety of programs, including Community Action Agencies, as part of his War on Poverty. He knew then as we know now, that the war against poverty must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House.

*[insert your CAA name]* was established in *[insert year]* to wage the war on poverty in *[insert city, county and/or state]* by promoting self-sufficiency for those of limited income, ensuring that all residents are able to live in dignity; by implementing innovative and cost-effective programs to improve the lives and living conditions of the impoverished; by providing support and instruction for everyone in need of assistance; and by being a major voice of reason in establishing welfare system reforms.

“Community Action Month is a wonderful time to honor and celebrate the impact Community Action has in the lives of families and communities across the country,” stated *[Executive Director/President of your CAA - name and title]* “Agencies are successful every day in helping families achieve economic security. Given that the needs of each family and community are unique, Community Action is able to use a range of resources and programs to meet local needs in creative and impactful ways.”

*[insert your CAA name]* statistics underscores a positive impact on local neighborhoods. The group helps countless individuals improve their lives each year by providing them essential services and life-changing opportunities through Individual Development Accounts, financial education and job training as well as making available affordable housing, economic development, natural disaster relief and recovery, health care, energy assistance, and more.

Despite experiencing budget cuts, shrinking resources, and increased demands for services during these challenging economic times, *[insert your CAA name]* has been remarkably successful assisting the low-income veterans, senior citizens, families, children, students, and everyone of *[insert city, county and/or state]* to achieve and maintain economic security. As *[insert your ED name]* attests: “Our staff is committed to their task of replacing disadvantages with opportunities because it is right, because it is wise, and because, in our hearts and minds we believe it is possible to conquer poverty in our lifetime.”

*[Your CAA name]* will host *[insert event name]* for Community Action Week on *[insert event details]*.

# Community Action Month 2016

## Sample Proclamation

# Proclamation

*[insert your CAA logo here or print on agency letterhead]*

**WHEREAS**, Community Action emerged from the heart of President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 proclamation of America's "War on Poverty" where battles must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House; and

**WHEREAS**, Community Action has put a human face on poverty for 52 years by advocating for limited-income citizens without a voice, so that they may enter the middle class and reach for the American dream, replacing their despair with opportunity; and

**WHEREAS**, Community Action builds and promotes economic stability as an essential aspect of enabling and enhancing stronger communities, which in turn promotes self-sufficiency, ensuring that all Americans are able to live in dignity; and

**WHEREAS**, Community Action has enhanced the lives of millions of people across America by providing essential, life-changing services and opportunities such as affordable housing, economic development, health care, energy assistance, natural disaster relief and recovery; and

**WHEREAS**, Community Action already serves 99% of America's counties in rural, suburban, and urban communities and because it is right, because it is wise, and because, in our hearts and minds we believe it is possible, we will conquer poverty in our lifetime; and

**WHEREAS**, Community Action will continue to implement innovative and cost-effective programs to improve the lives and living conditions of the impoverished; continue to provide support and opportunities for all citizens in need of assistance; and continue to be a major voice of reason in establishing welfare system reforms;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I *[insert name & title]* of *[insert city and/or state name]*, do hereby proclaim May 2016 as **COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH** in recognition of the hard work and dedication of all *[insert city and/or state name]* Community Action agencies.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of *[insert city and/or state name]*, on this day of *[insert date]*.

SIGNATURE OF: *[insert name]*  
BY THE: *[insert title]* OF: *[insert city and/or state name]*

ATTEST: *[insert name]* *[insert position]*



# Community Action Month Tools



## Toolkit Tools:

**Selfie Signs:** Print the signs in color and take pictures or videos of board, volunteers, and staff holding them. Post on social media and your website.

**Color the Huggy Heart:** Print the coloring book page and have Head Start/Early Head Start children color them. Post the pages in your lobby. (Adult coloring books are all the rage—who on your team can color the most creative Huggy Heart?)



## Other Network Tools:

**Community Commons:** This online tool not only helps with your Community Needs Assessment, it also has the power to produce maps of your local community with poverty and other stats to help tell your story. Link to it at [Community Commons](#).

**Help with Social Media:** New at using social media? There are two recorded webinars that may be of help. [Twitter 99: When you are not ready for Twitter 101](#) and [Twitter 201](#).

**CSBG Annual Report:** Find your state's Fact Sheet and summary outcome data at [www.nascsp.org](http://www.nascsp.org).

Check your local CAA's Annual Report for numbers, stats, and outcomes to use!



**COMMUNITY ACTION**

# **We Are Community Action!**





# THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

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# Activity: Color The Huggy Heart



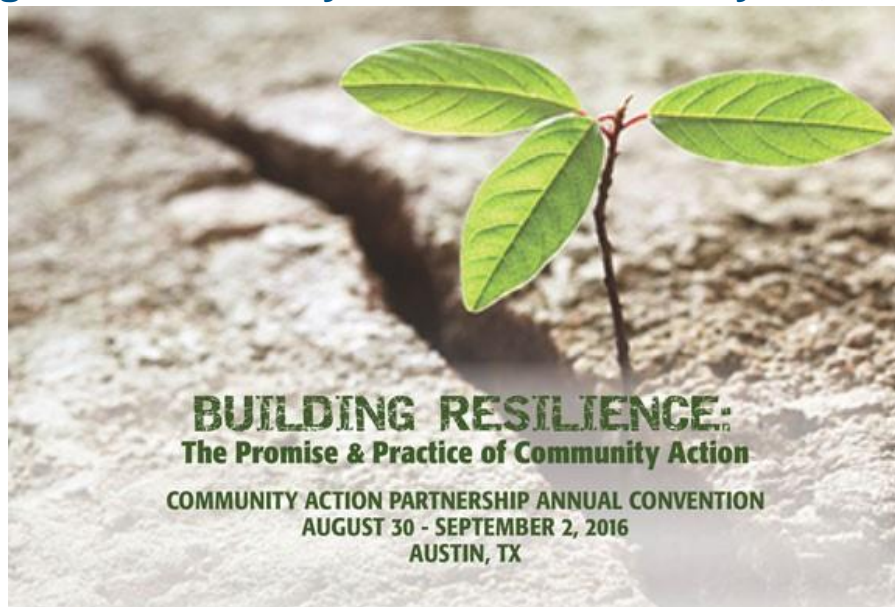
**#BeCommunityAction**

## **Send us your Community Action Month stories!**

Please send Joi Ridley, Director of Communications, copies of Proclamations, press releases, pictures, videos, etc. at [jridley@communityactionpartnership.com](mailto:jridley@communityactionpartnership.com)

## **Hope we see you in Austin! 2016 Community Action Partnership National Convention**

**Register [Now!](#) Early Bird Rates End May 27, 2016!**



### **Convention Tracks**

**NEW:** Performance at the Front Line  
Effective Administration and Governance  
Promising Anti-Poverty Practices  
Strategies to Increase Visibility  
Research, Policy, and Action

### **Avoid the rush!**

Reservations are now open to book rooms at the JW Marriott Austin for the 2016 Community Action Partnership Annual Convention.



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