

2018-19
Annual Report



Community Action Agency of Somerville
Working to end poverty where we live

**HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES AND
INDIVIDUALS ACHIEVE FINANCIAL
SECURITY WHILE WORKING TO
ELIMINATE THE ROOT CAUSES OF
ECONOMIC INJUSTICE**

CAAS

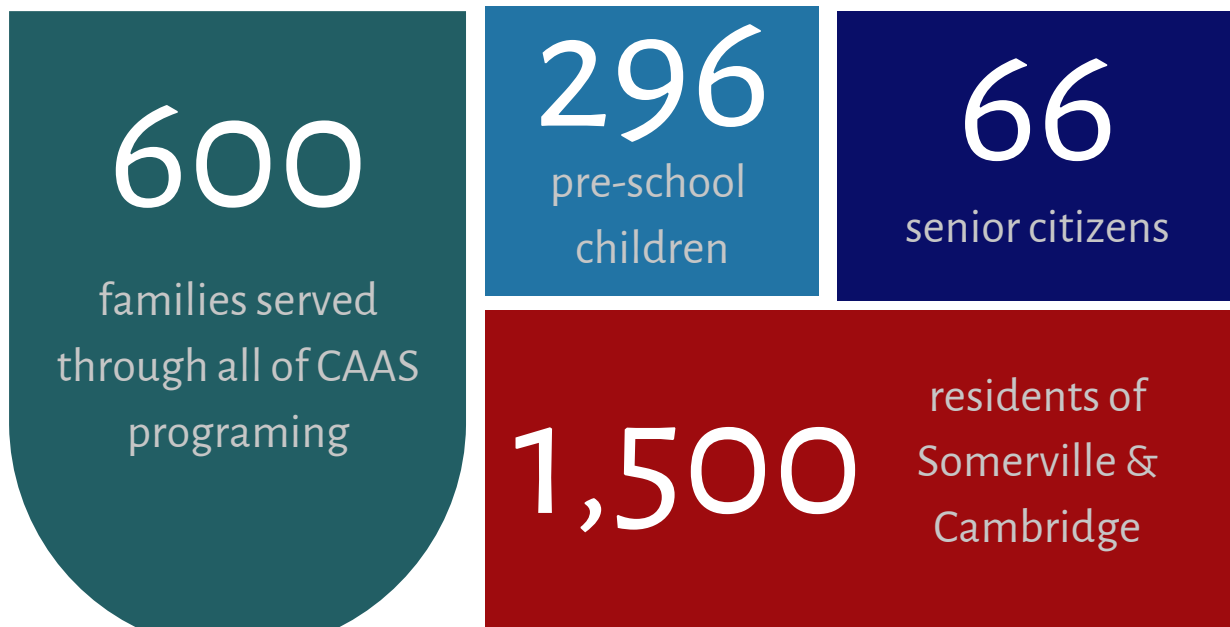
WWW.CAASOMERVILLE.ORG

Since 1981, Community Action Agency of Somerville has worked to end poverty where we live.

Our Mission is to reduce poverty among local families and individuals while working to counteract - and whenever possible, eliminate - the societal conditions that cause and perpetuate poverty.

We do this by supporting three main programs: Head Start, the Housing Advocacy Program (HAP) and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA).

Our Reach



Message from President & Executive Director

We are pleased to share this Annual Report with you, our neighbors, donors, and friends. 2018 was an exciting year for CAAS, and a challenging year for our city and our country. Despite an ongoing climate of fear and threat affecting the most vulnerable families in our community, we were able to continue to provide excellent Head Start and Housing Advocacy services to low-income residents faced with the rising costs of child care and housing. We successfully renewed our Head Start contract with the Federal government for the next five years, through 2023. A new grant from the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund allows us to give funds directly to clients to help them avoid eviction. We also collaborated with our partners in the Somerville city government and nonprofit community to support the establishment of two important tools to combat homelessness and displacement: the City's Office of Housing Stability and the independent Somerville Community Land Trust.

2019 has already seen the establishment of CAAS as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site, the first time this program has been offered anywhere in Somerville for several years. Our VITA volunteers assisted low- to moderate-income families, families with disabilities, and families with limited English language skills in filing correct and complete tax returns, maximizing their refunds at no cost to them. Returns were filed for 86 families, and over \$151,000 in federal and state refunds were returned to filers! We look forward to expanding this program in the 2020 tax season. And of course we continue to seek opportunities to expand our work and to even more effectively meet the needs of low-income residents.

The struggle to end poverty can seem daunting at times. This is why CAAS focuses on practical solutions that make solid resources - educational, financial, and community - available to families who need them most. Together we are making a difference, and together we can achieve our mission: to end poverty in Somerville!



Kristan Haas
President



David Gibbs
Executive Director

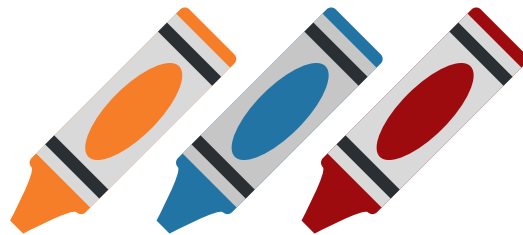
Head Start

Head Start is a comprehensive developmental preschool program that provides a variety of wrap-around services to low-income children and their families each year. Head Start supports the learning and development of children ages three to five in classrooms located throughout Somerville and Cambridge.



296 Children

received comprehensive
preschool education



"It's very important for kids' readiness for school. They will learn about sharing, they will learn about schedules, friendships, overall self-confidence, as well as language skills, healthy meals, a love for learning. In this program, kids can be kids; they can be themselves. As a parent I have felt immensely supported, in a way that I always have support from teachers, family advocates, and Head Start staff. I have learned a lot, not just in knowing that my kid will be in a safe place where he will learn, but as a mother, giving me the tools that I need to keep teaching after Head Start. Being seen by the staff for my qualities makes me more confident as a mother. I wish all the mothers could have that as well."

-Claudia S., Head Start parent

Housing Advocacy Program

CAAS' Housing Advocacy Program provides a wide range of services to low-income individuals at risk of homelessness. This includes **preventing evictions** through advocacy with landlords and in district court and maximizing income by **improving access to public benefits**. Case management targeting the root causes of housing affordability helps prevent future crises. The Housing Advocacy Programs serves Somerville residents with incomes up to 80% of area median income (AMI). Through **tenant organizing** and **policy advocacy**, CAAS takes a systemic approach to advancing the mission by engaging low-income residents in collectively pushing for social change.



95

Evictions Blocked

41

Residents Secured
Housing



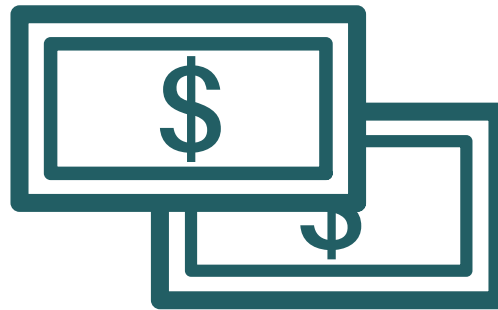
*"CAAS went out of the way to contact both my father and I to make sure we understood what was going on. You fought for my dad's rights and guided us in decision making. You showed compassion, made my dad more confident and allowed him to understand the process. **I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts. You kept my dad off the streets and kept him from losing his house.**"*

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance



The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides low- and moderate-income families with free tax preparation assistance. Our VITA Program helps **reduce the tax burden** for families and assists them in getting money back that can be used to build savings or pay off debts. We also provide these services to people with disabilities and to limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns.

86 individuals received
our tax services



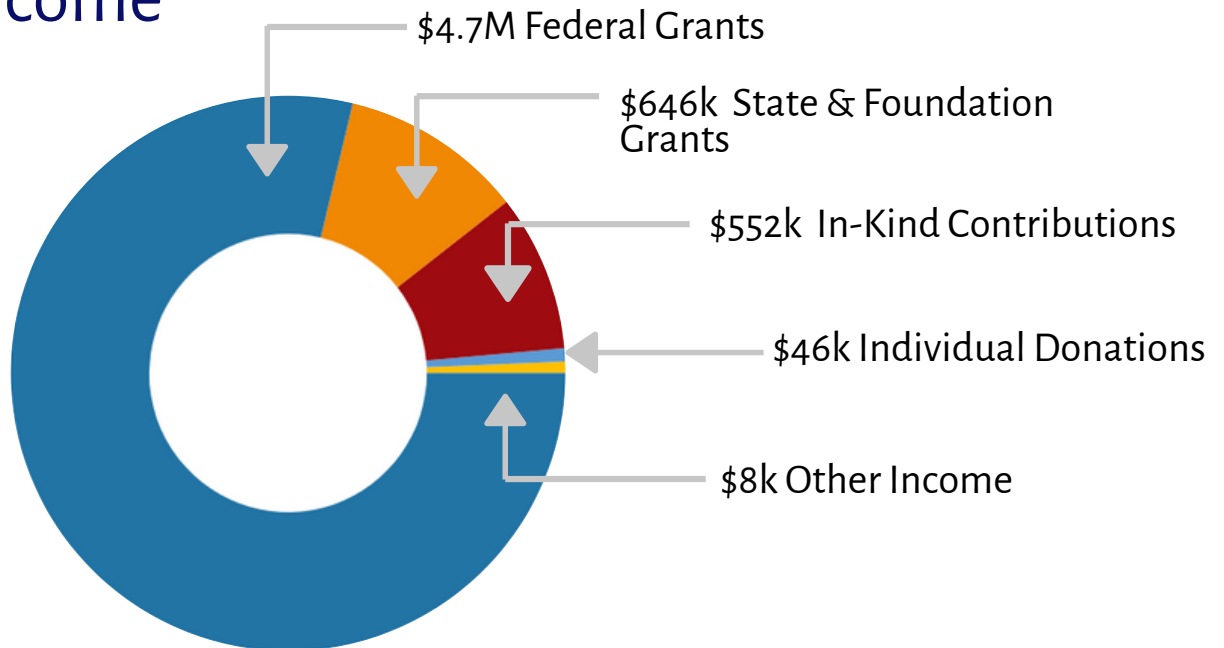
\$151,083 in tax refunds

"The whole community benefits when working people can turn their financial tightrope into a stable pathway to success. VITA helps people do just that."

-VITA volunteer

'18-'19 Financial Statement

Income



Expenses



Salaries and Wages, \$2,584,432	Benefits and Payroll Taxes, \$1,364,213
Consultants, \$222,592	Employee Travel, \$21,920
Occupancy, \$533,911	Consumable Supplies, \$104,591
In-kind Expenses, \$552,440	Other Direct Expenses, \$415,161
Depreciation, \$77,282	

Our Board Of Directors

The composition of the 2018-19 CAAS Board of Directors represents the collaboration between three stakeholders in combating poverty: the low-income community of Somerville, local government, and the Somerville community at large.

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CAAS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our donors. Your gifts help to improve the lives of those most in need. We thank you for your continued support. We'd also like to thank our **CAAS Champions**. These donors have made a special commitment to supporting our work with automatic monthly gifts. We are particularly grateful for these predictable gifts in these uncertain times.

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Community Action Agency of Somerville



For more information on CAAS and our programs, please visit us online at www.caasomerville.org