



W.A.M.Y. Community Action, Inc.  
**2023-2024 Annual Report**



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Sign-up for our E-Newsletter:

[www.wamycommunityaction.org](http://www.wamycommunityaction.org)

Reflecting on my journey with WAMY Community Action, it's been an incredible year serving as Executive Director. Our mission is to uplift our neighbors in Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties, a commitment we've held since 1964. For generations, we've supported local families in achieving self-sufficiency and improving their lives. We've seen firsthand the transformation from poverty to prosperity.



In celebration of 60 years of service, we are excited to announce the launch of our new logo, symbolizing our continued commitment and evolution. Additionally, we are thrilled to share that we have opened a new office in Yancey County, further strengthening our presence and ability to support the community.

This past year has brought significant changes and new opportunities. We continue to grow, adapting to our community's evolving needs. Recognizing a pressing need for housing, we expanded our efforts in that area, adding more repair programs and working to improve housing availability and affordability. We're thrilled to have discovered new ways to address childcare needs in the region, ensuring we continue to support our families.

Our Bridges program has increased our efficiency by streamlining our intake process, allowing us to conduct comprehensive assessments and ensure our clients receive the services they truly need. Additionally, we've found impactful opportunities for community volunteers to become WAMY Warriors through various volunteer initiatives. We've also forged new collaborations with other agencies, enhancing our ability to serve the community effectively. Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Together, we continue to build a stronger, more resilient community.

*Brittany Luxton*

Percentage of people living in poverty

WATAUGA

24.9%

AVERY

11.2%

MITCHELL

13.4%

YANCEY

15.3%

### **OUR MISSION:**

To partner with families and communities to provide the disadvantaged the support and tools they need to become self-sufficient.

### **THE PROMISE:**

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.

## **WHAT IS COMMUNITY ACTION?**

Community Action Agencies are a nationwide network of non-profits that operate on the philosophy that low-income individuals are the ones best equipped to identify the issues facing their communities. It is a coordinated effort to address the root effects of poverty and to, ultimately, move families and individuals to self-sufficiency.

The goal is to stabilize families to avoid the long-term dependence on public resources through the provision of support, tools, and resources to promote independence.

There are 34 Community Action Agencies across the state of North Carolina, serving all 100 counties with a variety of programs and services.

25

families worked toward becoming self-sufficient through the Total Family Development program!

100

homes are safer, more affordable and healthier places to live!

YOU

helped change more than 2000+ lives this past year in the High Country.

108

families received financial assistance for emergency needs!

65

kids were able to attend quality childcare programs!

1400

seniors and low-income youth received practical holiday gifts!

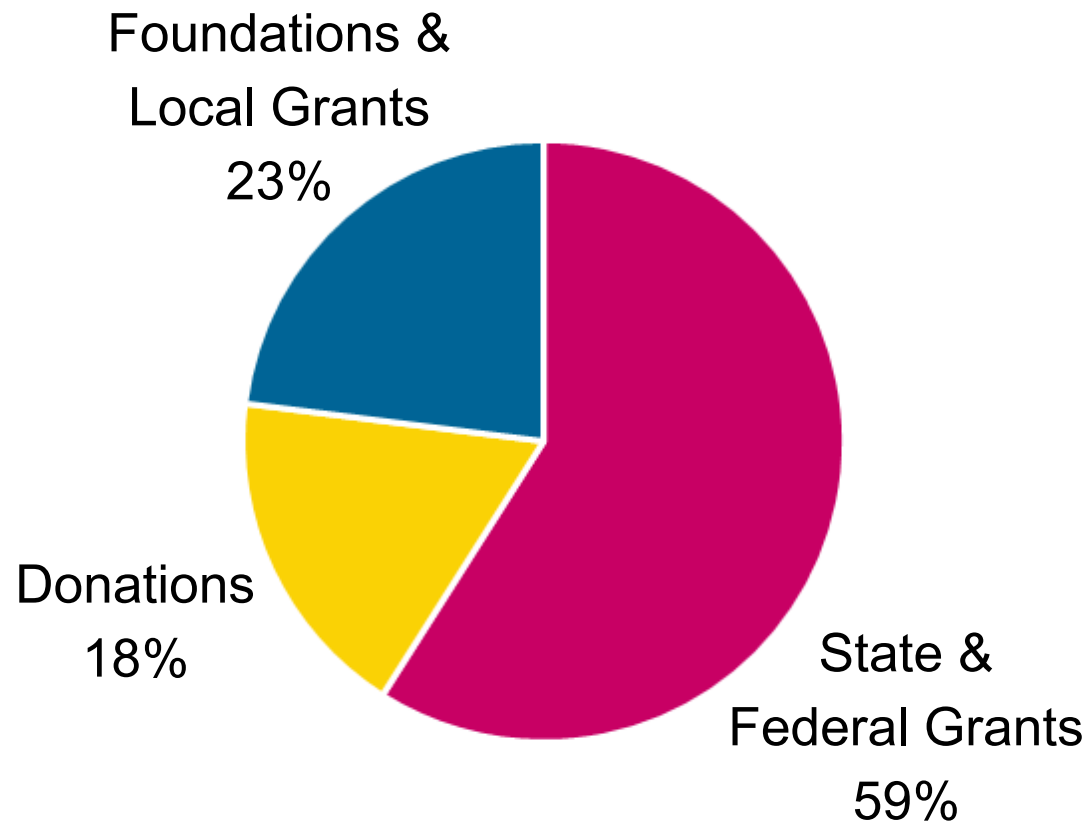
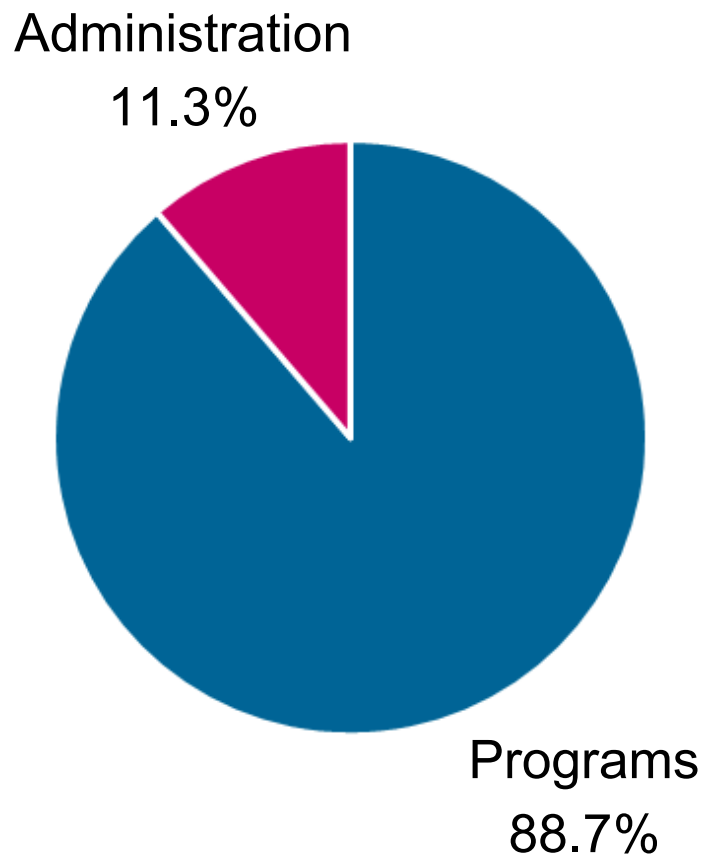
2181

pounds of produce from our Community Garden were grown and distributed in the community!



# FINANCIALS

WAMY Community Action, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is funded by multiple grants alongside foundations and private donations. The majority of our funding goes directly to programs to make as large an impact as possible in our community.



# HOUSING

- **Weatherization** – Completing measures on homes to make them more energy efficient and lower client energy bills.
- **Heating and Air Replacement** – Repairing or replacing failing heating systems for low-income households.
- **Housing Preservation Grant** – Home repairs for low-income households funded through the USDA
- **Urgent Repair Program** – Home repairs for low-income households that are an imminent threat to their safety.
- **Essential Single Family Rehabilitation** – Comprehensive home repairs to bring low-income households up to minimum housing standards.
- **Housing Coalitions** – Critical home repairs for low-income households that are not covered by other grant sources.



Critical home repairs have shown to be a cost-effective measure in deterring the displacement of our most vulnerable neighbors, preventing them from entering an overburdened and overpriced housing market. WAMY's Housing Department programs completed work at **100 homes this year** - making them safer and healthier places to live for years to come!

# BRIDGES



A new initiative this year, our Bridges program is designed to help families facing financial struggles to help them stay on their feet. Assistance can include rental assistance, utility bills, fuel assistance, car repairs, new uniforms for employment, and more!

In its first year, the Bridges program assisted **108 families**. The average cost to keep a family on their feet is \$530.

# SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

Support our Students (SOS) is a childcare scholarship program to help low-income families have access to the same opportunities as other local families. The main goals of the program are to ensure school aged children are being properly supervised outside of school hours and to help their guardians maintain their employment.



This year, WAMY helped **65 children** attend quality childcare programs and no qualifying family was turned away!





# TOTAL FAMILY DEVELOPMENT



WAMY's Total Family Development program helps individuals and families on their journey to better education and employment in hopes that they will make a living wage and truly break the cycle of poverty.

Each client works with a case manager who helps them along the way to reaching their goals. This help includes setting goals, budgeting, planning and financial assistance. Total Family Development is an intensive program, working with families for an average of two years.

This year, **25 families** worked toward greater self-sufficiency through this program!



# COMMUNITY GARDEN



WAMY is proud to help fight food insecurity in Avery County through our volunteer run Community Garden! This year, the garden produced over **2000 pounds of produce** that was distributed by Feeding Avery Families to low-income families in need!

# HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

With the help of many community partners, WAMY distributed over **1400 holiday gift bags** to seniors across Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey, Counties!

Not only that, we were able to provide personalized holiday gifts to **20 low-income families!**



# WAMY WARRIORS

WAMY Warriors is a network of volunteer groups that want to make a difference for their neighbors in need. Volunteer projects have included neighborhood clean-ups, cookouts, yard work, visiting nursing homes, small home repair projects and more!

Anyone who wants to become a WAMY Warrior and help someone in need should contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Yolanda Robertson at [yolanda@wamycommunityaction.org](mailto:yolanda@wamycommunityaction.org)



# BOARD

# STAFF

## WATAUGA

TOM HUGHES

NATALIE BOVINO

CAMERON WISHON

CHARLIE WALLIN

CYNTHIA DILLON

## AVERY

CATHY BURESCH

JONATHAN SHEPPARD

SAMANTHA KNIGHT

BETH GACEK

ARLENE WEINER

## MITCHELL

MARVIN WALKER

DEANNA GOUGE

RUTHIE STYLES

MORGAN WOOD

## YANCEY

VANESSA LETTERMAN

ANGIE VANCE

DARLENE MARSH

MAXINE MCLAUGHLIN

Brittany Luxton, Executive Director

Corey Babay, Finance Director

Allison Jennings, Director of Development

Sarah Freer, Director of Administration

Yolanda Robertson, Volunteer Coordinator

Seth Moore, Intake Specialist

April Beck, Housing & Energy Director

Mel Jirka, Lead Energy Auditor

Danielle Moreland, Housing & Energy Coordinator

Jim Shoupe, Housing Technician

Josh Shoupe, Rehabilitation Specialist

Leisa O'Mara, Family Development Director

Lynette Walker, Family Development Coordinator





# OUR SUPPORTERS



Celia Lipton Farris and Victor W. Farris Foundation Home Community Fund a component of the North Carolina Community Foundation



High Country United Way



NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



BANK OF AMERICA



The Dillon Family Foundation

Rick & Susan Geldmeier

Hogan Family Foundation

Thank you to many others who donated. Your generosity transforms lives every day.

**\$25**

can cover the cost of seed, soil and delivery of fresh produce from our Avery Community Garden, a work uniform for someone starting a new job, or offer practical gifts for an isolated senior citizen during the holidays.

**\$50-\$75**

can help cover transportation costs for families accessing services through WAMY's Family Development program. It can also stock one of WAMY's Little Free Food Pantries.

**\$2500-\$5000**

can help support the WAMY Community Action operating budget, allowing us to continue providing critical services to families in need in the community. It can also help fund new program initiatives.

**EVERY GIFT COUNTS**

Big or small, your contributions will have an impact on the life of a child or family in need.

Choose the level that is right for you.

**\$100-\$200**

can provide childcare for a working parent or help provide energy upgrades to make housing more affordable.

**\$1000-\$1500**

can send a child to camp for an entire summer or cover the cost of a new wheelchair ramp for a family in need.

**\$500**

can help a low-income family avoid eviction by covering a portion of rent or help a low-income homeowner with a minor home repair.



## Annual Giving

One time gifts via online or mail are an easy way to support our mission. Contact Development Director, Allison Jennings at 828-264-2421 ext 107

## Be a G.E.M.

Give Every Month!

You can set up a recurring donation by calling our office, emailing, or visiting our website. Recurring monthly donations create sustainability. Contact Allison to learn more.

## WAYS TO GIVE

If it is on your heart to make a difference for someone in need, we invite you to join us. Donations can be made online at [www.wamycommunityaction.org](http://www.wamycommunityaction.org) or mailed to:  
225 Birch Street Suite 2  
Boone NC 28607

## Endowment

A gift to our endowment fund helps ensure we are achieving our mission for generations to come. Contact our Executive Director, Brittany Luxton, for more information. 828-264-2421

## In-Kind Gifts or be a WAMY Warrior

In-kind donations can include new blankets or puzzle books for senior citizens or volunteer as WAMY Warrior by contacting our Volunteer Coordinator, Yolanda.

## Sponsor Denim & Diamonds

Opportunities are available for your business to support our one-of-a-kind event. We will highlight your business and you give back to families in need. Contact Allison to learn more.

## Sponsor a Home Repair

Support a WAMY Home Repair project and enhance your community impact while gaining valuable marketing exposure. Join us as a sponsor to empower volunteers and elevate your brand visibility. Contact Allison to learn more

## WATAUGA

225 Birch Street, Suite 2  
Boone, NC 28607

## AVERY

723 Cranberry Street  
Newland, NC 28657

## MITCHELL

496 A Balsam Avenue  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

## YANCEY

20 Academy Street  
Burnsville, NC 28714



Established  
in 1964



[www.wamycommunityaction.org](http://www.wamycommunityaction.org)  
1-800-571-9269  
[info@wamycommunityaction.org](mailto:info@wamycommunityaction.org)

