

A white silhouette map of Region II, showing the outlines of New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands, set against a blue background.

RPIC REGION II

NEW YORK · NEW JERSEY · PUERTO RICO · US VIRGIN ISLANDS

February 2021

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Region II News

Community Action Partnership of New Jersey (CAPNJ) News

CAA Network Response to Hunger in New Jersey

The network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) throughout New Jersey have been effectively working on addressing the growing need for food since the pandemic. It is distressing to see that this need continues to grow daily in some of our communities. According to a recent report on [food insecurity](#) 200,000 children face hunger every day in New Jersey. The expected increase in hunger since the pandemic is reported at 50%, and another [report](#) has highlighted the growing number of food insecure individuals since the pandemic, including:



- There are over 1.1 million people experiencing food insecurity living in New Jersey. More than 1/3 of them are children.
- More than half of the children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Essex County were children living in Newark.
- Nearly 14% of households in New Jersey are experiencing food insecurities.

Many NJ CAA's have noted there are a high number of people asking for food and additional services for the first time. Many agencies are doing outreach focusing on educating people on benefits and programs such as SNAP. [HOPES CAP, Inc.](#) is currently targeting outreach efforts to seniors with their phone number for easy access to information.

Another agency, [United Progress Inc.\(UPI\)](#), changed their method and model of food distribution to "pop-up" food distribution in places like parks. This is in addition to keeping pantries stocked in additional locations and delivering food to seniors to ensure they continue to have access to the food they normally come to us and pick up. [Gateway Community Action Partnership, Inc.](#) has been sharing easy recipes, delivering food and providing prepared meals. They have provided meals to 5,000 individual and family households every month to meet the need since the rise of COVID-19.

Another agency, [Greater Bergen Community Action Partnership, Inc.](#) has been addressing the local hunger needs of the community by distributing ready to heat meals for some communities, providing weekly meals for Head Start children, delivered meals to seniors, and providing specialty food kits to families in transitional housing. Greater Bergen CAP has worked to serve over 7,000 people that have experienced food insecurity in some way. Some of the CAA's like [Norwescap](#) also operate Food Banks making an impact through food distribution and other collaborative services to keep the food pantry shelves full and making sure that there is a significant impact on reducing hunger in New Jersey. Additionally, [OCEAN, Inc.](#) assisted in 7,500 individuals last year who experienced food insecurity.

A review of the initial data in the statewide reporting system, EmpowOR, demonstrated the need during the last year resulting in over 100,000 individuals who received food or prepared meals. Every CAA in New Jersey rises to the challenge and finds new and enhanced ways to address hunger by expanding services, outreach, education, and creating new partnerships.

Puerto Rico Community Action Association (PRCAA) News

ASPIRA, Inc. of Puerto Rico uses Education to Battle the Economic Crisis in PR.

The economic crisis that PR is facing requires the training of individuals capable of attacking the problems that perpetuate social inequality and limit the island's capacity for growth. Puerto Rico is committed to the development of human capital to achieve a better future. However, the analysis of data on school dropouts, unemployment and poverty on the island reveals the seriousness of this problem.

For example, it is estimated that about a third of students do not complete high school in Puerto Rico. On the other hand, the Census indicates that about 30,000 young people, between 15 and 19 years old, are not enrolled in a school, a number that is greater than the population of 37 of the 78 towns in PR. More than half of the people without a high school diploma live below the poverty level and of these, only 8% are employed. In fact, PR is by far the US jurisdiction with the highest percentage of poor people (41.8% compared to 11.3% in the US). The data analysis leads to the conclusion that those most affected by poverty are children, women and people over 65 years of age.

Several investigations on the subject reveal that equity has become a mandatory recipe for the development and well-being of society in aspects such as:

- Poverty Reduction
- Generation of jobs
- Increase of national savings

At [ASPIRA](#) it is understood that education is the determining factor in helping Puerto Ricans overcome poverty and lead productive, healthy and satisfying lives. For that reason, ASPIRA offers comprehensive education, leadership development opportunities, and support to help those who want to help themselves.

Learn more about ASPIRA, Inc. programs [here](#).

New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) News

New York's Community Action Agencies Respond to COVID-19

NY CAAs have been creatively adapting their services and programs to meet expanding customer needs and working to build the resilience of their communities.

They have been on the front lines and will continue to respond to the needs of the individuals and families they serve. [Click here](#) to see the efforts by New York's CAAs to address the challenges created by the pandemic.



NYSCAA's 2020 Annual Report is Now Available

NYSCAA's 2020 Annual Report is now available on the [NYSCAA website!](#)

[Click here](#) to download the report.

National Partner Information

National Partner Resources on Covid-19

In light of increasing concerns about a broader coronavirus outbreak and the impacts on normal business operations, the national partners have compiled resources that are available to the Community Action network.

- [CDC's COVID-19 Site](#)
- [CAP's Coronavirus Resource Page](#)
- [CAPLAW's Coronavirus Resource Page](#)
- [NASCSPP's Coronavirus Resource Page](#)

Community Action Partnership - Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) Exam Guidance

The Partnership is hosting a webinar to assist candidates planning to take the CCAP exam. The session will focus on the best strategies for preparing for the examination; noting what distinguishes the CCAP exam from other kinds of tests, with particular focus on the Study Guide and practice questions.



[Click here](#) to register for the webinar.

New COVID-19 Web Resources from CAPLAW

As winter approaches and we face new and increased COVID-19 challenges across the country, CAPLAW would like to remind the Community Action Network about two online resources that we are continually updating to assist the Network during this difficult time.



These resources, initially released in spring 2020, contain in-depth information and analysis, and updates to them reflect evolving laws, regulations, guidance, and events related to the pandemic. They include:

- [Building Readiness: Planning, Prevention, Response, and Liability](#) - Contains guidance presented as a series of FAQs to anticipate and address many of the questions related to operating during the pandemic. The five sections addressed are: planning for onsite services, prevention and workplace safety protocols to minimize the spread of COVID-19, responding to known or suspected cases of COVID-19 in the workplace, liability issues around COVID-19 related claims, and other resources for additional guidance.
- [CARES Act Benefits for Nonprofit CAAs](#) - Provides details on certain benefits made available to non-profit CAAs through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and the Economic Security Act (CARES Act), including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP loans), Emergency Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), Main Street Lending Program, Employee Retention Credit, and payroll tax deferrals.

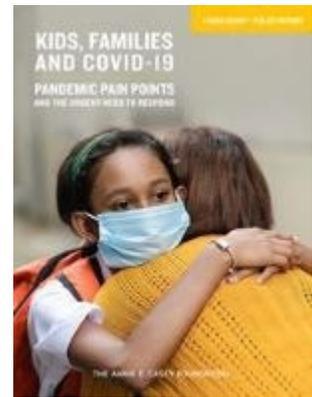
Additional Resources

The Annie E. Casey Foundation - Kids, Families and COVID-19

This [KIDS COUNT policy report](#) examines how households with children are faring during the pandemic. Its findings are primarily based on surveys conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread economic damage and isolated families in unprecedented ways. Parents have had to juggle both educating and caring for their children. Millions of Americans have lost not just their jobs, but their sense of stability, source of income, and health care.

To succeed now and after the pandemic, families must have good health, both physical and mental, and the health care to maintain it. They must also have food and the money to buy it; safe, stable housing and communities; education and the means to access it; and quality child care so that parents can work. [Click here](#) to read more.



Harvard University Center on the Developing Child - How Racism Can Affect Child Development

Years of scientific study have shown us that when children's stress response systems remain activated at high levels for long periods, it can have a significant wear-and-tear effect on their developing brains and other biological systems. This can have lifelong effects on learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.



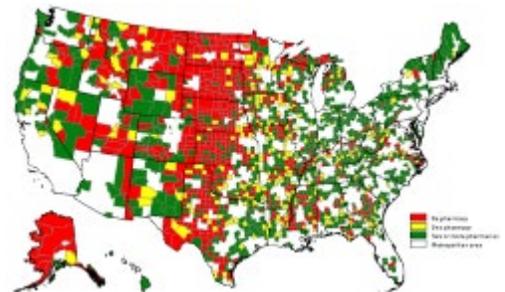
A growing body of evidence from both the biological and social sciences connects this concept of chronic wear and tear to racism. This research suggests that constant coping with systemic racism and everyday discrimination is a potent activator of the stress response. This may help us understand the early origins of racial disparities in chronic illness across the lifespan.

The evidence is overwhelming: Black, indigenous, and other people of color in the U.S. have, on average, more chronic health problems and shorter lifespans than whites at all income levels.

[Click here](#) to read more.

The Rural Blog - One-Third of Rural Counties Lack a Pharmacy Listed in Coronavirus Vaccination Plan

According to a new study, almost one-third of rural counties don't have a pharmacy partnered with a chain or network that's participating in the federal government's coronavirus vaccination program. "The [study](#) from the Rural Policy Research Institute's Center for Rural Health Policy and Analysis found that 750 of the 1,962 nonmetropolitan counties in the study do not have a pharmacy that is listed in the federal Health and Human Services vaccine distribution partnerships," Tim Marema reports for The Daily Yonder. "The combined population of those rural counties is about 5.6 million, according to the study, or about 13 percent of the rural population."



In November, the federal Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) said the vaccine would be distributed through chains such as Rite Aid, Walgreens, Kroger, Walmart, and independent pharmacy

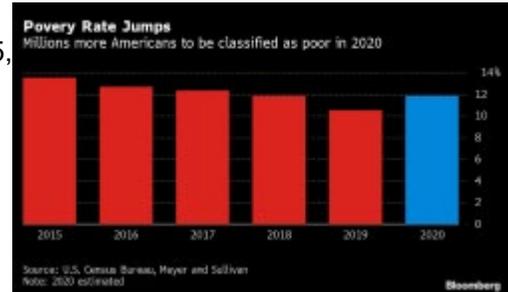
networks such as Good Neighbor Pharmacy, Marema reports. Such locations make up 60% of the pharmacies nationwide.

[Click here](#) to read more.

Bloomberg - U.S. Suffers Sharpest Rise in Poverty Rate in More Than 50 Years

The end of 2020 brought the sharpest rise in the U.S. poverty rate since the 1960s, according to a study released January 25, 2021.

Economists Bruce Meyer from the University of Chicago and James Sullivan of the University of Notre Dame found that the poverty rate increased by 2.4 percentage points during the latter half of 2020 as the U.S. continued to suffer the economic impacts from Covid-19.



That percentage-point rise is nearly double the largest annual increase in poverty since the 1960s. This means an additional 8 million people nationwide are now considered poor. Moreover, the poverty rate for Black Americans is estimated to have jumped by 5.4 percentage points, or by 2.4 million individuals.

[Click here](#) to read more.

National Professional Development Opportunities

National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP)

2021 Winter Training Conference

March 8 - 12, 2021

[Click here to register.](#)

CAPLAW

2021 Virtual Training Conference

June 29 - July 1, 2021

[Click here](#) to learn more.

National Community Action Partnership (NCAP)

[2021 Annual Convention](#)

Pre-Convention Training: August 30-31, 2021

Core Convention: September 1-3, 2021

Boston Marriott - Boston, MA

virtualCAP.org



CAPLAW
Community Action Program Legal Services, Inc.



N A S C S P

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