The mission of ACTION INC. is to improve the lives of economically disadvantaged individuals and families on Cape Ann and beyond by minimizing the effects of poverty, promoting economic security, and advocating for social change.
Who are we: Board of Directors

Officials
CHAIR • Linda Giamanco • Public Sector, City of Gloucester
VICE CHAIR • Tone Kenney • Community Sector, Ipswich Housing
SECOND VICE CHAIR • Roger Lesch • Public Sector, Town of Rockport
SECRETARY • Linda Murphy • Community Sector, Ipswich Caring
TREASURER • Dennis Acker • Private Sector, Santander Bank, Gloucester

Community Sector
Marcia Hahn • Millbrook Park, Rockport
Kyrstin Lavelle • Client & Housing Services, Gloucester
Mary Neofotistos • Housing Services, Gloucester
Loretta Peres • Riverdale Park, Gloucester
Kathy Stewart • Riverdale Park, Gloucester

Public Sector
Charlotte Dodge • Town of Ipswich
Courtney Lane • Town of Essex
Marcy Pregent • Office of State Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante
Richard Rafuse • City of Gloucester
Gretnchen Wood • Town of Manchester

Private Sector
Gavin Keenan • Ipswich Police Association
Briana Militello • Seacoast Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Gloucester
John Prybot • Sawyer Free Library, Gloucester
Shelly Luckenbill Sevinor • Attorney
Rebecca Sumner • First Ipswich Bank
Reverend Karin Wade • St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Rockport

A balanced approach
ACTION INC. is governed by a tripartite Board of Directors, with a balance of representatives from the community, public, and private sectors. Our members come from a broad range of backgrounds and bring a diversity of interests and experiences to the Board, from financial experts to former police officers, members of the faith community, and past clients with a deep connection to our mission.

A long-term commitment
ACTION INC. is lucky to have many long-time members serving on our Board. For decades, these caring individuals have been wholeheartedly committed to understanding our community’s struggles and strengths, and working to make it a better place for people from all walks of life.

Recognizing years of service
5+ years: Linda Murphy, Kathy Stewart
10+ years: Marcia Hahn, Gavin Keenan, John Prybot, Richard Rafuse, Rev. Karin Wade
15+ years: Charlotte Dodge, Roger Lesch, Loretta Peres, Gretchen Wood
30+ years: Linda Giamanco, Tone Kenney

A look toward the future
Over the last five years, ACTION INC. has welcomed eight new members to our Board, including professionals with banking, real estate, law, and health care backgrounds; community members who have experienced ACTION’s programs first-hand; and concerned mothers who want Cape Ann to be a great place to live for their children. With such a mix of experience and energy between our long-time and newest members, we’re looking ahead to a productive and exciting future.

Get to know one of our newest Board members: Dennis Acker

Living in Gloucester since 1988 and working here since 2000, I realized how fortunate I am to be able to live and work on Cape Ann. The community has been very supportive of me while working formerly at Citizens Bank and now at Santander. In 2011, I was asked to spend a couple hours discussing financial planning with the students in ACTION’s COMPASS Youth Program. That led to three years of meeting with students weekly and helping them prepare for the future. During this time, I fully realized that everything ACTION supports is something I want to be a part of.

I feel it is important to give back to my community. Being ACTION’s Treasurer, I hope my financial background adds some value to the Board and to the overall health of ACTION INC. and Cape Ann.
Energy Services

Who we are: Our award-winning Energy team works to save people money while saving the environment. Fuel Assistance staff help households with their home heating bills, and Energy Conservation staff bring those bills down through energy-saving improvements on homes throughout the state.

Programs and services: Help with heating and utility bills, home energy assessments, weatherization, heating system repairs, replacement of light bulbs and some appliances, and national energy affordability advocacy.

What are people saying?

“I can’t believe how much warmer the house felt and how much less we spent last winter. We’re retirees living on Social Security, so it’s really a huge help.” ~ Salatore

2013 Outcomes

• 14,467 households received home improvements overseen by ACTION and 3,553 performed directly by ACTION
• 3,714 households received help paying home heating bills
• 49 weatherization and heating system contractors and 16 fuel vendors received work
Program Outcomes

HomeCare

Who we are: ACTION HomeCare is a team of health care professionals that includes in-house nurses as well as a staff of more than 90 to care for seniors and disabled adults within their homes, keeping them out of hospitals and assisted living facilities.

Programs and services: Personal care, medication reminders, light housekeeping, laundry, shopping, transportation to medical appointments, caregiver respite, Home Health Aide services, and hospice care.

What are people saying?

"My mom needed more help than she could give, but she would have been broken-hearted to leave her house. ACTION was a life-saver." ~ Robert

2013 Outcomes

• 533 senior citizens and 10 disabled adults received services that allowed them to stay at home
• 656 staff hours were spent in trainings to increase credentials and better serve our clients
• New Hoarding Task Force implemented

Job Training & Education

Who we are: Our educators, coordinators, and counselors help adults identify career interests, improve basic job and life skills, and seek new opportunities. We stay on top of the latest job market trends to design programs that result in real jobs and wage increases.

Programs and services: Adult Basic Education classes, GED preparation, health care industry training programs, job counseling, and placement services.

What are people saying?

"Graduating from the HHA program was my first step toward a real career. Now I'm preparing for nursing school - I can't wait!" ~ Jan

2013 Outcomes

• 123 adults gained skills to help with employment
• 55 obtained jobs
• 53 completed the Home Health Aide Training Program
• 48 enrolled in Adult Basic Education classes
• 35 ABE students increased their ability by a grade level

RAYS Re-Engaging All Youth to School Initiative

Offered through ACTION’s COMPASS Day Program for high school juniors and seniors, RAYS allows younger students (ages 14-15) who are in danger of dropping out of public school to attend COMPASS part-time and get back on track. At COMPASS, RAYS students have the support of caring adults and benefit from an integrated approach that includes academics, civic learning, art classes, and counseling. We partner with the Cape Ann YMCA to connect RAYS students with community service opportunities at local nonprofits that have included an animal shelter, food pantry, and senior center. The goal at the end of the year is for students to re-engage in school either full-time at COMPASS or at Gloucester High School. Six students participated in RAYS in 2013, with three increasing their attendance rate by 20% or more, and five earning enough credits to advance a grade level.

"If it wasn’t for RAYS I don’t know where I would be. I went into the program pregnant. I had so much support from my fellow students and teacher. I enjoyed coming to school and I gained a lot of confidence.”

~ Gia, 2014 COMPASS graduate

Bailee’s Backpacks Back-to-School Drive

In September 2013, 109 Gloucester elementary and middle school students showed up on the first day of school with brand new packs and supplies thanks to ACTION’s first annual Bailee’s Backpacks drive.

The drive was made possible with the help of local seven-year-old Bailee Militello and her mom, Brieana, along with North Shore 104.9 Radio, the Office of State Senator Bruce Tarr, and generous individuals, groups, and businesses throughout Cape Ann who chose to donate supplies for kids in need.

The goal of Bailee’s Backpacks is to help struggling families with the considerable expense of sending their children back to school each Fall. As school budgets tighten, families must find room in their own to tackle the long supply lists their children bring home. Through Bailee’s Backpacks, 65 families felt that burden lifted in 2013.
**Innovative Solutions**

**Welcome Home, Cape Ann’s Housing First Program**

Chronically homeless individuals with co-occurring disabilities are often the hardest to serve, requiring individualized behavioral and physical health services, which is a near impossibility within the setting of homelessness. ~ Joe Finn, President, Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance

During 2013, so many Americans continued to struggle to afford basic necessities and stay housed. As more people became homeless and were turned away from overcrowded shelters, many found themselves without a roof over their heads. Limited shelter beds are often filled night after night by chronically homeless individuals with serious barriers to stability, including severe mental and physical health issues, that prevent them from finding permanent homes. As a result, shelters see little movement and the newly homeless are left out on the streets.

Here on Cape Ann, the picture was no different. But now, with ACTION INC. launching the area’s only Housing First model program, we’re working to change that picture and put an end to local homelessness. ACTION’s new Welcome Home program uses the Housing First low-threshold model to get the most difficult-to-house individuals out of shelters, off the streets, and into affordable, permanent housing. Unlike so many other programs, the Housing First model doesn’t require participants to meet certain eligibility criteria or reach specific milestones in order to receive housing. The philosophy is that once individuals are housed, they will have the stability necessary to begin to address serious issues such as disabilities and debilitating substance abuse.

The core goal of Welcome Home and the Housing First model is to keep people housed and reduce the significant costs to cities and states associated with the chronically homeless, including shelter operating costs and emergency health care. ACTION receives funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and from the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance to cover housing vouchers for program participants. According to the Alliance, in Massachusetts “the annual costs per chronically homeless person decreased from $33,474 before housing to $24,102 after housing placement, resulting in an annual savings of $9,372 per person.”

ACTION recognizes that housing is just the first step toward a healthier, more self-sufficient life for our Welcome Home participants. That’s where Tom Connolly comes in. As ACTION’s Welcome Home Case Manager, Tom works with landlords to find housing placements, coordinates the furnishing of apartments, conducts weekly home visits, and connects people with services and resources such as counseling, health care, and public benefits. Participants also have access to ACTION’s Licensed Substance Abuse and Mental Health Counselor, and are assisted with addressing life skills such as communication, housekeeping, and self-advocacy. This vital case management component of Welcome Home is funded through the Community Support Program for People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness.

Tom came to ACTION from Heading Home in Cambridge, one of Massachusetts’ original Housing First programs. During his six years there, Tom saw many difficult and heartbreaking cases and worked hard to keep people housed and connect them to the help they needed. “This population in general is the toughest you’ll find. Most have multiple issues—drug addiction, alcoholism, mental health, impulse control,” said Tom. “These are the 15% among the total homeless population that cost 75% of the resources.”

Now Tom is continuing his work here on Cape Ann, and it hasn’t gotten any easier. “In many ways, Gloucester has even tougher struggles than Cambridge. People are isolated and dealing with severe alcoholism and disabilities without any support. I’ve seen people drink themselves nearly to death, and others get evicted over and over due to hoarding.”

While his days are often discouraging, Tom sees firsthand that the Housing First model truly does work. “These are people that would otherwise be spending years living in shelters and on the streets, costing thousands more dollars and not getting any of the support they need. I’ve seen some amazing turnarounds, but that’s the exception. What I see that counts is that they are no longer in shelter, no longer on the streets, and they’re gaining control over their lives.”

At 18, out on his own for the first time, Manny made his way to Gloucester and for many years earned a living as a fisherman. But as the local fishing industry collapsed, he found himself unemployed, illiterate, facing untreated mental health issues, and living on the streets. After spending five years sleeping at the ACTION Shelter, Manny, now 55, has finally found permanent housing and the support he needs through Welcome Home.

**Nearly 50 years ago, six-year-old Manny was dropped off at the Fernald State School, the Western hemisphere’s oldest public institution for people with developmental disabilities. The school became infamous at various points in history for wrongly institutionalizing young boys, performing medical experiments on residents, and for accusations of physical and sexual abuse. During his 12 years at Fernald, Manny never learned to read or write.**

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Who were we in 2013?

7,190 clients served 157 staff members
3,659 households served* 20 Board members

*Our Energy Services division oversaw energy-saving home improvement projects on an additional 14,467 households

Who do we want to be?

Looking ahead to 2014 & beyond

Community Needs Assessment

During 2014, ACTION will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the needs among economically disadvantaged residents of Greater Cape Ann, including the City of Gloucester and the towns of Essex, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, and Rockport, Massachusetts.

Planning for the future

The 2014 Community Needs Assessment will be part of a larger strategic planning process that ACTION undergoes every three years. This process helps us to assess our internal operations, customer and employee satisfaction, programs and services, and funding strategies, and enables us to identify new ways to meet community needs and future opportunities for collaboration.

Our approach

To get the conversation started, we’ve already placed surveys at businesses and organizations throughout Cape Ann. You can complete our survey online at www.actioninc.org.

We’re also interviewing key individuals in each of the communities we serve, and gathering folks together for group discussions about needs, issues, and great new ideas for how to address them.

What’s next?

The information and ideas we gather will inform our 2015-2017 Community Action Plan and determine who we want to be for the next three years. The Plan will be available in early 2015. Until then, check out our current Plan at actioninc.org/publications.html

2013 clients at a glance

Single-parent households: 1,069
Disabled clients: 1,134
Clients ages 55 & up: 1,974
Household income below 200% of poverty level: 3,134

Homeless clients: 235
College educated: 812

156 partners in 2013

- 72 non-profit organizations
- 6 faith-based groups
- 16 city/town departments
- 19 state agencies/departments
- 10 federal agencies/departments
- 2 for-profit corporations
- 5 consortiums/collaborations
- 1 housing consortium
- 4 school districts
- 2 post-secondary institutions
- 3 financial institutions
- 14 health service institutions
- 2 statewide associations

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Who we are: ACTION staff

Administration
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Ken Kulyn, Chief Financial Officer
Jessica Benedetto-Unger, Director of Marketing and Planning
Judy Manchester, Director of Human Resources
Geraldine Coughlin, Administrative Assistant
Patricia Foster, Bookkeeper
Agi Simon, Grants Coordinator

Client & Housing Services
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Laura Hart, Client Services Coordinator
Jennifer Beloff, Advocate
Tom Connolly, Housing First Case Manager
John Cordes, Shelter Case Manager
Shannon Cronin, HOPWA Case Manager
Molly Derr, Counselor
Debbie Eason, HomeCorps Case Manager
Fatima Gomes, Advocate
Eric Kreilick, Advocate
Mike McNair, Homeless Services Case Manager
Megan Merlin, Intake Specialist
Jim Noble, Shelter Manager
Stella Mac Seams, Rental/Mortgage Assistance Coordinator

Shelters Staff: Michael Barry, Melody Fidler, Carolyn Fountain, Michele Gaynor, Thomas Good, Christine Heard, Daniel Hossack, Eugene Simpson, John Thackeray

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Kelly Karvelas, Academic and Vocational Coach
Lauren Riley, Health and Wellness Coordinator
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Rita Carvalho, Energy Director
Marie Sanviti, Assistant Energy Director
Craig Brown, Conservation Services Director
Louis Silveira, Associate Conservation Director
Brian Beote, Senior Multifamily Building Performance Specialist
Linda Brayton, Fuel Assistance Advocate
Jonathan Daley, Energy Efficiency Manager
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In memory
With the passing of Thelma McDermott in March 2014 in a tragic house fire, we lost a dedicated HomeCare nurse and a much beloved member of the ACTION family. Thelma, you will be missed.

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Other Funders & Partners

- Accord Food Pantry
- Action for Boston Community Development
- Abbott Gilbert Hospital
- Adult Foster Care
- Amos Sampson Village Church
- Backyard Growers
- Berkshire Community Action Council
- Better Off Baby Showers
- Beverly Bootstraps
- Beverly Housing Authority
- Birth to Three Family Center
- Cape Ann Art Haven
- Cape Ann Interfaith Commission
- Catholic Charities
- Center for Community Recovery Innovations
- Children’s Friend and Family Services
- City of Gloucester
- Coalition for the Homeless - Lynn
- Community Action Inc. – Harvill Community Action Organization of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions
- Community Action Programs Inter-City
- Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation
- Community Development Inc. - Lowell
- Consumer Credit Counseling
- Elder Service Plan of the North Shore
- Elixir Community Human Services
- Emmanuel
- Essex County Bar Association
- Essex Housing Authority
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- First Ipswich Bank
- Franklin Square House Foundation
- Gloucester Department of Public Health
- Gloucester District Court
- Gloucester Family Health Center
- Gloucester Fire and Police Departments
- Gloucester High Risk Task Force
- Gloucester High School
- Gloucester Housing Authority
- Good Friday Walk
- Grace Center
- Green Foundation
- Harborlight Community Partners
- Healing Abuse Working for Change
- Holy Family Parish
- Housing Assistance Corporation
- Independent Living Center of the North Shore
- Invest in People
- Ipswich Caring
- Ipswich High School
- Ipswich Housing Authority
- Low-income Energy Affordability Network
- Lindens Foundation
- Lynn Economic Opportunity
- Lynn Housing Authority
- Lynn Shelter Association
- MA Clean Energy Center
- MA Commission for the Blind
- MA Community Action Partnership
- MA Departments of Children and Families, Housing and Community Development, Mental Health, Transitional Assistance, and Youth Services
- MA Energy Directors Association
- Manchester Essex Regional High School
- Manchester Housing Authority
- Maritime Heritage Center
- Mass Housing
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- MassHealth
- Menotomy Weatherization
- Mission of Deeds - Reading
- Mountauksett Opportunity Council
- Moore’s Way
- National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
- National Association of State Consumer Advocates
- National Community Action Foundation
- National Energy Assistance Director’s Association
- National Grid
- Neighborhood Legal Services
- New England Community Action Association
- New England ISO
- North Shore Career Center
- North Shore Community Action Programs
- North Shore Community College
- North Shore Community Health
- North Shore Continuum of Care
- North Shore Housing Action Group
- North Shore Workforce Investment Board
- Northeast Behavioral Health
- Oak Ridge National Labs
- Open Door Food Pantry
- PAICE Partners, North Shore
- Pathways for Children
- Project SAFE
- Quincy Community Action Programs
- Riverside Methodist Church
- Rockport Community Preservation Committee
- Rockport Council on Aging
- Rockport High School
- Rockport Housing Authority
- Salem Community Health
- Seacoast Nursing and Rehab
- Self Help, Inc.
- Senior Care
- Shaw Fund for Mariner’s Children
- South Middlesex Opportunity Council
- South Shore Community Action Council
- SandiFarm Bank
- Springfield Partners for Community Action
- St. Paul Lutheran Church
- St. Vincent DePaul
- Springfield WIC
- Stonehill College
- Taconic Health
- The Low Income Peer Exchange
- TEC@Home, LLC
- Tri-Region Community Action Program
- US Departments of Energy, Energy Resources, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor
- Veterans’ Office
- VNA Care Network & Hospice
- Wellington House
- WHE
- YMCA

2013 Financial Report

Total expenses: $47,515,455
Total revenue: $49,056,875

Sources of funding:

- Corporations**
- Government grants
- Individuals
- Foundations
- Other

* Just 3% of ACTION INC.'s budget goes toward administrative costs
** Funding for statewide energy conservation programs overseen by ACTION’s Energy Services division

Join us

ACTION INC. relies on generous individuals and groups who choose to support our programs. While large government grants and corporate partnerships allow us to offer specific programs such as weatherization projects throughout MA, it is private contributions that help us to meet such a broad range of needs here at home. When you support ACTION, you become part of a holistic, community-wide approach to fighting poverty and improving lives.

Visit us online to learn more and contribute, or mail your contribution to:

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