




# MEETING NEEDS HEAD ON

IMPACT REPORT 2023

 COMMUNITY  
ACTION  
MARIN

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

# BEING THERE

FOR COMMUNITY IS WHAT WE DO AT COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN.



**I SEE ALL THAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED** this past year and I'm proud of our team. I'm grateful for our friends and supporters who make so much possible and give us the courage to do hard work. Still, we have much to do to meet the needs of many across Marin.

Our recent Community Needs Assessment, based on input from those we help, as well as others throughout the county, revealed that

housing, health, and education continue to be the top concerns. This is especially relevant among people of color and those of low income.

As Marin County's leading anti-poverty agency, our work helps people address their emergency needs, gain skills, obtain high-quality early education for their children, build confidence, and increase financial stability. Our dedicated team helps people to find jobs and put food on the table.

We meet people where they are, helping them to get on a path of self-sufficiency and success through programs and services. At the same time, staff is implementing our strategic Levers for Change to help shift the narrative around poverty and advocate for policies and systems that produce equity.

Living our values guides all that we do. With trust as our foundation, we pursue healing-centered approaches to bring about transformative change. We recognize the importance of doing the work in our own house to create meaningful steps toward equity and well-being for all of us.

This is just the beginning. I invite you to read through this report and join us to create a stronger Marin!

Thank you for helping us to serve more of our community, increase our impact, and move forward **ON A PATHWAY TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS HEAD ON.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chandra Alexandre".

**Chandra Alexandre**  
Chief Executive Officer

**INDIVIDUALS**

**3,814**

people directly served on pathways to better outcomes

**COMMUNITY**

**\$16M**

provided in county rental assistance by advocating for and distributing funds

**AGENCY**

**23%**

increase in frontline pay to \$22/hour agency-wide



## "IT IS EXCITING

TO BE ABLE TO OFFER SERVICES TO THE GOLDEN GATE VILLAGE PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS IN OUR NEW COMMUNITY CENTER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN. As we as a community embark on a revitalization project to rehab and restore all 300 units of affordable housing, providing services is a key component. The services Community Action Marin offers can help residents with new opportunities, choice, and hope as we also work to renovate buildings and community spaces. We are truly grateful for this new partnership."

KIMBERLY CAROLL,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
MARIN HOUSING AUTHORITY

## SAFETY NET

**OUR SAFETY NET PROGRAMS PROVIDED PEOPLE WITH MUCH NEEDED STABILITY ON THEIR PATH TO WELL-BEING.** With increases

in the cost of living in Marin and almost a quarter of those in the county paying more than half of their income on rent, our programs are critical toward building a thriving community.

### ➤ Providing Utility Assistance.

Last year, we launched Marin County's Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). This federal program provided financial support so that low-income Californians could manage their residential utility costs. We worked with residents to assess eligibility based on household size, gross monthly income, and program priorities, and then paid past due utility bills, for those who qualified, with the funding.

### ➤ Partnering to Provide Services.

In partnership with Marin Housing Authority, our agency and four other local Marin community organizations collaborated to provide a range of services at the Golden Gate Village Community Center in Marin City. This year, our services included Rental Assistance, Utility Assistance, Emergency Food Boxes, CalFresh Assistance, Career Coaching, and access to job training programs. Partners included Marin Health & Human Services, CareerPoint Marin, Center for Domestic Peace, and the YWCA, Golden Gate Silicon Valley. Community Action Marin will be onsite every other week providing a more accessible social services location for residents.

### ➤ Proactive Support for Vulnerable Medi-Cal Recipients.

We were one of four organizations to receive Medi-Cal funding under a new plan called California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM). The plan was designed to provide primary medical care and preventive care to keep people healthy and out of costly hospital emergency room situations. CalAIM also funded non-clinical services provided by Community Action Marin that have an impact on health, such as access to housing and healthy food. The funding enabled us to provide housing information and housing deposits to residents of low income and to receive reimbursement for existing as well as new housing services.

**\$72k**

Amount of cash assistance provided to **112 FAMILIES** for emergency assistance, help with car repairs, or motel stays

**\$1.62M**

in 1,858 energy and water utility services to **1,600 HOUSEHOLDS**



# CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

## FREE AND AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE IS A LIFELINE FOR FAMILIES.

We are proud to be Marin County's Head Start grant recipient and official anti-poverty agency. Numerous studies indicate that when children receive high-quality care and education during their early years of life, they are better prepared for school, become better readers, and are more likely to graduate high school. Achieving these outcomes for every child and family, and our community as a whole, motivates us to continually transform and improve.

### ➤ Addressing the Early Childhood Educator Shortage.

Without teachers, our ability to avoid staff burnout, maintain a strict one to eight teacher/student ratio, and serve all eligible children and families is hampered. The issues are systemic, with the staffing shortage driven by historically low wages for early childhood professionals. Explains Gina Guillemette, Chief Strategy

Officer at Community Action Marin, "Without teachers, classrooms remain closed, children and their families in Marin are denied access to care, and Marin loses access to millions of dollars that have already been funded and designated locally." A recent visit by Congressman Jared Huffman to our Old Gallinas Childcare Center helped focus advocacy on needed state funding for childcare.



**WE ARE SO APPRECIATIVE OF CONGRESSMAN JARED HUFFMAN'S visit to Old Gallinas Children's Center. Our children shared how much they loved the pozole from our Central Kitchen!**



## "IT'S SO POWERFUL TO SEE

**HOW COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN WORKS ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL TO BE A SAFE AND WELCOMING SPACE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES.** In the Bay Area, where there is so much talk and rhetoric and virtue signaling around equity and justice, it does my heart good to see the agency achieving it—actually doing the REAL work of finding the ways in which policies need to change and getting them changed."

JANE LEU, AUTHOR, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR,  
AND STANFORD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS LECTURER



553

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN**  
that received high-quality  
early education

92%

**OF PARENTS**  
said the program helped with  
employment, education, or caregiving

96%

**OF STUDENTS**  
said they felt happy, safe, and a sense  
of belonging in our programs

1.24k

**HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED**  
including developmental delay  
assessments, physical exams, and  
dental, hearing, and vision screenings

➤ **Composting Partnership Brings More Learning to Children.** Community Action Marin teachers and staff initiated a partnership with waste management and recycling company Recology Sonoma Marin. The goal of the partnership was to divert food waste from landfill through food recovery and composting at our three Novato Children's Center locations: Hamilton, Meadow Park, and Lynwood. The program introduced composting and recycling practices into the agency's early childhood education curriculum, showing students how to lower our waste footprint and create a healthier community and environment.

➤ **Increasing Family Well Being.** Last fall, we piloted our first outdoor sensory classroom, an environment designed to provide children with a space to regulate emotions and address an array of sensory processing needs. As of March 2023, we have two sensory classrooms at two of our largest child development centers. Our indoor sensory classroom at Old Gallinas Children's Center has been used by five preschool classes for over twenty children with exceptional needs. Families have used the sensory room at pick-up time and have commented on the classroom's calming effect.

## "I CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM THE LOVE AND SUPPORT

RECEIVED FROM COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN. I CANNOT IMAGINE WHAT MY LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE ASSISTANCE AT THIS CENTER, where all children are provided with essential opportunities for exploration, self development, and the freedom to express themselves...I am forever grateful for the incredible support I received from the agency and for the opportunities they provided. This organization and its mission have given hope, meaning, and purpose to so many young people and families and enabled them to see a brighter future in their respective journeys."

JOHN LAM, PRINCIPAL DANCER  
BOSTON BALLET, FORMER  
PRESCHOOL PARTICIPANT



## HOUSING JUSTICE

**✕ THE COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED BY COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN LAST SPRING SHOWED HOUSING WAS THE TOP CONCERN OF THOSE SURVEYED, WITH 70% RANKING IT IN THEIR TOP THREE.** 26% of

those surveyed also indicated housing discrimination as a concern. The housing burden continues to fall unfairly on low-income populations and people of color, reinforcing the need for programs, policies, and action to help all Marin County residents.

Laurel Hill, Community Action Marin's Director of Safety Net Services observed "Whether a client comes to us for financial coaching, utility assistance, or enrollment in early childhood

# 169

Average number of HOMELESS SERVED each month

# \$8.2M

Amount of Housing Financial Assistance provided to 1,070 HOUSEHOLDS

## "THANK YOU FOR ASSISTING ME

WITH MY RENT HELP APPROVAL. I AM FEELING SUCH A SENSE OF RELIEF. I love how everyone comes together to get things done, especially when it's something urgent like retaining housing. Thank you for going above and beyond at Community Action Marin!"

SUE, RENTAL ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT

education, housing is almost always one of the biggest challenges for them and their family, with a huge impact on their family's overall well-being."

### ➤ Providing Housing Stability.

This past year, in collaboration with the Fairfax Town Council, Marin County Board of Supervisors, and San Rafael City Council, we secured approvals to extend a residential eviction moratorium through September.

Loss of housing created a well-documented negative ripple effect that impacted the entire community. Relocation disrupted school, social lives, families, and employment connections. It also impacted employers who were facing a staffing shortage, as well as our local economy. The extension provided timely relief and stability to renters who were experiencing financial stress from the pandemic and other economic realities.

## **“THE NEWS THAT MORE RENTAL ASSISTANCE WAS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ERAP) WAS WELCOME NEWS FOR THOSE WE SERVE AND OTHERS WITHIN THE COUNTY.**

As many households were struggling financially and behind on rent, despite the help from prior programs, there was still a great need for additional support. Lots of families who lost their jobs and were impacted by the Shelter in Place still hadn't fully recovered financially. With the ERAP program, we were able to reach households who may not have been eligible before or missed the first rounds of assistance.”

**CHRIS MIRANDA, SENIOR MANAGER SAFETY NET SERVICES,  
COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN**

The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) also provided rental assistance to those in need. In the face of a growing housing crisis, our advocacy and administration of the ERAP program provided needed help to stay housed to landlords and renters in our local community. Our agency, along with partner agencies, conducted intake and provided application assistance, with Community Action Marin then distributing the funds for approved applications. Through this program alone, Community Action Marin served 911 households and provided \$7.86 million in rental assistance to tenants and landlords. An extension of local eviction moratoria across the County also provided stability for renters.

**› Keeping Youth Housed.** Since 2015, the number of homeless youths living in California has risen 32% to a staggering 15,000 young people. This

past year, 11% of homeless residents in Marin were defined as youth (children under 18 years old and transition-age youth aged 18-24).

Transition-age youth are often caught between agencies or do not know how to access available services. Concerned this age group was being left behind, we made a strategic decision to expand our focus to reach this group. In collaboration with the county, we secured funding to spearhead a three-year effort supported by the Tipping Point Community to help tackle these issues.

The project will support three teams focusing on Southern Marin, Central Marin, and West Marin. While the teams would work collaboratively and would engage with many of the same systems and service providers, services would be tailored to meet the unique needs of each community. It is expected that a total of 40 young people will be served each year.

## **“THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU’VE DONE TO HELP OUR DAUGHTER.**

**YOUR OUTREACH PROGRAM LITERALLY SAVED HER LIFE BY GETTING HER OFF THE STREET. THERE’S MILES TO GO.** Mental illness isn't a quick fix but we wouldn't have made it this far without your help. Thanks for helping so many people in need.”

**KATHERINE T., COMMUNITY SUPPORTER**



## **“I WANT TO SHARE MY GRATITUDE FOR THE EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**AND COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN'S SUPPORT. I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE ELSE TO TURN TO AND I WAS WORRIED.**

I'm a single mother and it's hard to support myself at times. Last year I was injured at work and had to take time off. Rent and bills started stacking up. Luz Lopez told me about the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, and I acted immediately. I filled out an application, provided the requested documents, and continued to check-in. My rental application was processed and approved for past due rent owed from November 2022 - February 2023. I am very thankful.”

**MARIA J.,  
EMERGENCY RENTAL  
ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT**



## ECONOMIC JUSTICE

### WE PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE, AGENCY, PROSPERITY, AND HOPE

through a powerful set of financial empowerment and workforce development programs. Our Economic Justice programs are designed to provide the tools and guidance that people need to improve their financial future, while providing support services to address any potential barriers to their success.

#### **Gaining Confidence & Transforming Finances.**

SparkPoint financial coaching is an essential resource for students just starting out, recently single adults, those beginning to plan for their retirement, and anyone who wants to improve their financial understanding and status. In our coaching programs, members define their goals and set


**307**  
Number of Sparkpoint participants. **WITH OVER 190 WHOSE SAVINGS, CREDIT, OR DEBT IMPROVED BY AT LEAST 30%**

**92%**  
Participants in the food services apprenticeship program who obtained an industry recognized certificate, with **67% EXPANDING THEIR SMALL BUSINESS**

**87%**  
Amount of kitchen apprenticeship program participants who maintained or **INCREASED THEIR LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE** in their career development

**\$203.1k**  
**RETURNED TO 160 MARIN FAMILIES** in our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program

priorities for their sessions. Our coaches provide support and the tools to help people track their money, create budgets, boost savings, improve credit, reduce debt, and learn to invest.

 **Putting Money Back in People's Pockets.** In our tax preparation services, caring trained volunteers guided Marin residents through matters such

as reporting on public benefits and claiming the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), so they could claim tax benefits for which they were eligible. This service helped maximize their refunds, providing them with additional dollars to pay expenses or to save for the future. It also helped them understand their choices for the following tax year.



# "IT'S WONDERFUL TO SEE SOMEONE

**BE ABLE TO PURSUE A CAREER IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY WHEN THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT TO DO.** I know some of the Food Futures apprentices would like to start a food business and go to local farmer's markets with their products. This is the perfect venue for training and for the other support they might need along the way. I'm excited to have them with us!"

ERIKA ACOSTA, WORKFORCE COORDINATOR, COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN



➤ **Pathways to Secure Employment.** Community Action Marin's career and workforce training offers coaching to develop resumes and cover letters, practice interviewing, secure interview-appropriate clothing, and search for job openings that match an individual's skill set. It also provides options for job seekers to receive job training and help securing a job in high demand professions. Success over the past year included:

- **Driving to Thriving.** The Commercial Driver's License Training Academy's goal was to provide training to low-income people seeking career opportunities as professional, trained, and licensed commercial drivers. Upon graduation, drivers were eligible to earn paid driver staff positions at Vivalon Rides, our partner in the program, and other local companies.

- **A Road to Self-Sufficiency.** The Workforce Accelerator 10.0 program aligned with our mandate to eliminate the causes and consequences of poverty in the county. This is the second grant received from the California Employment Development Department. Each of the program's 73 participants received customized services to support their education, training, and employment goals. The program also provided them the opportunity to discover

a new career path and to overcome significant barriers to employment, including homelessness, domestic violence, and insufficient English to apply for many jobs. A mid program survey to these individuals showed they were receiving the support, resources, and encouragement needed to achieve better outcomes.

- **Associate Teacher Apprenticeship.** Our Pathways to Success Apprenticeship provided a pipeline to future careers and hiring in early childhood education. In this unique partnership with College of Marin, participants earned 12 Early Childhood Education units, completed 2,000 hours of paid work experience, and were eligible for an Associate Teacher permit.

- **Feeding Careers in the Food Industry.** Our Apprenticeship Program trained and mentored those seeking a career in the food industry or entrepreneurship opportunities focused on food. The 6-month program equipped individuals with the knowledge and skills to develop and launch a small food business or to join the larger food and hospitality industry. Apprentices were matched with food industry professionals specializing in baking and butchering and received a chance to learn invaluable business and marketing skills.

## "WHEN I CAME TO COMMUNITY ACTION MARIN,

**I WAS LOOKING FOR A LIFELINE THAT COULD HELP ME EARN A LIVING AND HELP ME FIND NEW HOUSING.** It was a struggle to balance my financial problems, health issues, and housing situation.

The financial coaches helped me get a grant to pay for my vehicle registration, negotiate significantly lower car payments and apply to Marin Advocates to get emergency funds to pay for my cell phone. They also helped me focus on saving money and improving my credit score. I was also able to work on regaining my housing status and submit an application for affordable housing.

The best part is that I've now re-established my business. I couldn't have done it without Community Action Marin."

LUIS S., FINANCIAL COACHING PROGRAM PARTICIPANT



**1,099 lbs**  
of food  
**PRODUCED AT OUR FARM**  
in 2023

**4,591**  
Number of **MEALS**  
**PROVIDED** as part of the  
county's Senior Congregate  
Meal program

**150k**  
Number of meals and  
snacks provided to  
**553 CHILDREN** enrolled in  
our Children and Family  
Services programs

## FOOD JUSTICE

### FOOD INSECURITY AMONG THE LOW- INCOME FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

we serve within the county has intensified with 1 in 5 families (1 in 3 seniors) struggling to put food on the table.

The Food Justice program is a comprehensive effort to improve food security and access to nutritious food for all Marin County residents in need. This is done through emergency food boxes in conjunction with CalFresh assistance. The program also supports food entrepreneurs and provides meals via its central kitchen, teaches kids about nutritious food through learning gardens, and grows food for multiple programs at our Production Farms.

### Central Kitchen feeds Children, Seniors, and Businesses.

The agency operates all of its food services out of its 2000 square foot Central Kitchen. This commercial kitchen has provided breakfast, lunch, and snacks daily during program operations to children (toddler to school-age) across the county. The agency is a federally approved Child and Adult Food Care Program operator. Its Central Kitchen is open all year and is available for rental and storage for food entrepreneurs and also provides space for apprentices in the agency's food training program.

• **Lunch for Seniors.** Thanks to a partnership with Marin County, we are proud to provide healthy and delicious lunches to seniors aged 60 and older at four community centers. Lunches are made possible by the federal Older Americans Act Congregate Meal Program.

• **Healthy Soup for All.** This year, Community Action Marin began a partnership with ExtraFood and San Anselmo-based Insalata's Restaurant. The partners, using produce from the Production Farm, as well as ingredients from ExtraFood, began cooking and delivering soup twice a week to about 200 welcome recipients at our Children and Family Services childcare centers, as well as two of our Senior Congregate Meal locations.

• **Garden of Eatin' Curriculum.**

Teachers integrated this curriculum into their classrooms and taught topics like classifying fruits and vegetables, growing seasons and the nutritional content of fruits and vegetables, and how they support the growth of muscles and bones in children. The curricula are coupled with outdoor learning classrooms, including edible gardens and a Production Farm, allowing children and their families to reengage with land and food production. Through USDA and private funding, we continue to strengthen our Food Justice work.

➤ **Growing What We Eat.** This year's Earth Day celebration was a family volunteer event held April 22 at our Old Gallinas Children's Center & Gardens in San Rafael. Parents, guardians, students, and siblings all came together to help get the farm and gardening beds ready for spring planting. The food grown at the Old Gallinas garden will be eaten by children daily in the children's center.

## "WE KNOW THAT CLIMATE CHANGE

**IS INCREASINGLY A DRIVER OF MIGRATION AROUND THE WORLD. ESPECIALLY FOR FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN DISPLACED FROM THEIR AGRARIAN ROOTS DUE TO DROUGHT AND EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS.**

Having the opportunity to farm and garden in a community setting increases food security and healthy eating while strengthening their relationship to the land, their culture, and their ancestors."

**PATTI D'ANGELO JUACHON,  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT  
AND LEGAL PROTECTION,  
MARIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

# ADVOCACY & INITIATIVES

## **ADVOCACY IS A KEY LEVER FOR CHANGE**

at Community Action Marin. As a direct result of our efforts connected to housing security, wages for childcare professionals, and more, we continue to put those in our Marin Community on a path to better outcomes.

➤ **Gaining Board of Supervisor support to increase rental assistance.** The Emergency Rental Assistance program has been a critical lifeline for many Marin residents experiencing the brunt of the housing crisis – namely communities of low-income, people of color, and female-headed households. Thanks to data demonstrating this inequity, as well as the hard work of the agency's team, the County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an additional \$1.3M for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) with the choice of prioritizing the waitlist or eviction prevention.

Community Action Marin had been selected to distribute the entirety of Marin County's rental aid funds during the past year. While ERAP had tremendous impact for individuals and families across Marin, it has also contributed to county-level goals of addressing homelessness, preserving affordable housing, and building a racially equitable community.

This also produced a positive ripple effect on individual and community well-being, including school attendance and children's learning, individual mental health,

family stability, as well as local employers' ability to retain a workforce and uplift our local economy.

➤ **Supporting the legislature's \$1 billion rate increase.** Despite the huge need for childcare across California and waiting lists of eligible children in need of care, our state's cost model has been a significant barrier to access. Workers in the early childhood field are predominantly women of color and early childhood professionals are among the lowest paid workers. Our efforts on the state and federal level to encourage others to join us in raising our voices for equity are making a difference. We are achieving more equitable pay for childcare providers with a long-term plan to overhaul how those rates are calculated.

➤ **Prioritizing equity within our agency.** As we pursue equity at the community and societal level, we also prioritize advancing equity within our own agency. The agency made an investment in staff with a new agency-wide minimum wage, moving from **\$15/HOUR TO \$22/HOUR OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS** (higher than the state minimum wage of \$15.50 per hour). With 200 employees and our role as a leading employer in the county, we are transparent around the race and gender makeup of our staff, leadership, and board of directors and also seek to attract, retain, nurture, and grow a diverse and equitable workforce.

OUR MISSION

# WE MAKE IT POSSIBLE

FOR PEOPLE IN MARIN TO ACHIEVE WELL-BEING BY PROVIDING THE VITAL SERVICES THEY NEED. TOGETHER, WE BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS THAT GET IN THE WAY OF FAIR AND LASTING CHANGE IN SERVICE TO **BETTER OUTCOMES FOR ALL.**

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**COMM  
UNITY  
ACTION  
MARIN**

