



ALLIANCE

FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Focused on the Future

2020 & Beyond

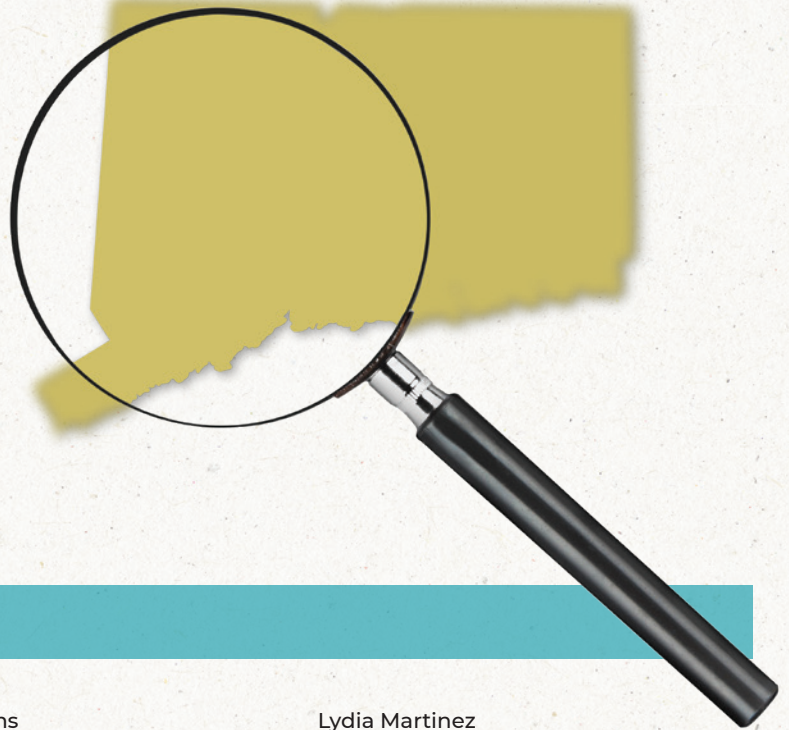
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement	1	Self-Sufficient Supportive Services.....	6
Board Of Directors	1	Youth Services	7
Executive Statement.....	2	Past Scholars.....	7
Message From Board Chair.....	2	Community Service Awardees	8
About Alliance / Focused on the Future	3	Agency Budget	9
Administrative Staff.....	3	Community Partners.....	10
Early Learning Division.....	4	Contributions	11
Energy Assistance	5		

MISSION STATEMENT

Incorporated in 1964, ABCD's sole mandate was to assist the underserved. Now called Alliance for Community Empowerment, Alliance concentrates its efforts and resources on identifying and eliminating the causes of poverty rather than only dealing with its effects.

Alliance's actions are directed toward promoting appropriate institutional change and enabling the underserved to become self-sufficient contributors to society.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Folson Almezy	Nettie Jenkins	Lydia Martinez
Rev. Fred Belcher	Sharon Skyers-Jenkins - 2nd Vice Chairperson	Mercedes Mullins
Lamond Daniels	Jessica Johnson	Jeff Mullins - Treasurer
Monisha Gibson - Secretary	Ralph Jowers - 1st Vice Chairperson	Keith Williams
Laurel Gross - Chairperson		

Executive Statement

This year's Alliance, Inc. Annual Meeting celebrates 56 years of community action and economic empowerment for our most vulnerable community members from Greater Bridgeport and also the Norwalk-Westport area. We are forever indebted to those leaders, who throughout our history, have uplifted the community. Today we celebrate our future and the hopeful forecast we see for our neighbors.

This past year we worked on improving our brand and increasing our capacity to bring important programming to the community. As we propel into the new vision we remain mindful of our community needs assessment data and the voice of our community. Moving forward we are committed to greater outreach, access to training and employment, more connections to affordable safe housing, better access to food and nutrition, an expansion of our early childhood education programs, and better access to community resources for seniors and youth.

Thank you for partnering with us on this exciting journey.

All my best,

Dr. Monette Ferguson



Dr. Monette Ferguson
Executive Director

Message From the Board Chair

What a difference a year makes! At last year's Annual Meeting we spoke of change: new times, new leadership, and a new Executive Director. We are so grateful for your support since then, and this year we are pleased to report that we are moving towards the future as an agency much stronger than ever.

As a result of last year's needs assessment, we created a strategic plan that will be our blueprint going forward. This plan literally hangs on our walls as a daily reminder of how best to fulfill our mission to alleviate poverty. We have energized our Board of Directors by welcoming new individuals with important skills, and re-engaging veteran members by holding the first ever off-site board retreat.

Under the direction of our Executive Director, Dr. Ferguson, we embarked on our first ever Fundraising Gala, for the purpose of soliciting unrestricted funds to be used for new and creative initiatives. Also with Dr. Ferguson's lead the agency has reached out to a myriad of community leaders and programs for cooperation and collaboration. These key partners include state and federal elected officials who are in unique positions to help us in our work.

Dealing with the recent outbreak of the coronavirus Covid-19 has also shown the drive and commitment of our staff leadership. Even while our doors are shuttered closed, these tireless staff members are working hard to serve our clients' many needs. These uncertain times have also shown their drive to seek new and creative ways to help people in need.

As always we are grateful to our community partners, funders, staff, clients and friends who make us the successful agency we are.

Thank you for the honor of letting me serve as the Alliance Board Chair.

Laurel Gross



Laurel Gross
Board Chair

Focused on the Future

2020 & Beyond

Alliance (formerly ABCD, Inc.) serves unique communities such as the towns of Easton, Fairfield, Trumbull and Monroe and urban centers such as Norwalk and Bridgeport. Add to that Stratford and Westport and you have a variety of communities with diverse needs. Our rebranding reflects that expanded footprint and desire to create an Alliance of support for our clients.

We are a local hub for collaborative conversations that lead to the development and adaptation of effective services aimed at the eradication of poverty. We strive to be the national leader in client experience, measurable outcomes, and innovative approaches to ending poverty and we dream of a day when poverty is mitigated. Over time, we will work to improve and expand our services and diversify our funding sources while partnering with other community agencies to deliver services our community needs; needs we hope our assistance will help minimize in the future. That said, our focus would continue to adapt to serve the entire region toward creating a better quality of life for all our community members.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Dr. Monette Ferguson
Executive Director

Harold Gaines
Maintenance Coordinator

Indi Hayes
Director of Finance

Johan R. Mann
Network Coordinator

Linda Kirkland
Executive Secretary /
Director of Youth Services

Tanya Lloyd
Director of Early Learning

Zeljka Trivunovic
Director of Operations



Early Learning Division

Early Learning Division (ELD) provides early childhood programs throughout the Greater Bridgeport area including services to pregnant women and children ages 0-5. Alliance focuses on high quality school readiness programming and evidenced-based curricula that prepare our children and families for continued educational success. Comprehensive services include health screenings for both vision and hearing, access to physical and dental exams, developmental and behavioral assessments, referrals to local community resources and parenting information.

KINDERGARTEN PREPARATION

Alliance is a leader in the early childhood field by ensuring that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for our children through our Head Start program. Alliance's School Readiness goals articulate the program's expectations of children's progress across the essential domains of child development and early learning that will improve children's readiness for kindergarten.

At the end of the 2018-19 program year, ELD transitioned close to 500 children to kindergarten. Parents were assisted with the registration process and paperwork to ensure a smooth transition process. Kindergarten readiness workshops were held for parents including advocacy, navigating the registration process, and supporting children with special needs. Families were also supported with generous donations of book bags, school supplies, and school uniforms.

OUR ANNUAL IMPACT

Alliance's Early Learning Division provided services to 1,669 children during the 2018-19 program year.

	Early Head Start	Head Start
Funded Enrollment	160	661
Cumulative enrollment of children & families served	321	1,035
Average monthly enrollment	100%	99.8%
Percentage of eligible children served	93%	91%
Percentage of children who received medical exams	95%	100%
Percentage of children who received dental exams	78%	98%
Percentage of children with health insurance	96%	99%
EL children who demonstrated improved skills for school readiness		93%
EL children who demonstrated improved emergent literacy skills		70%

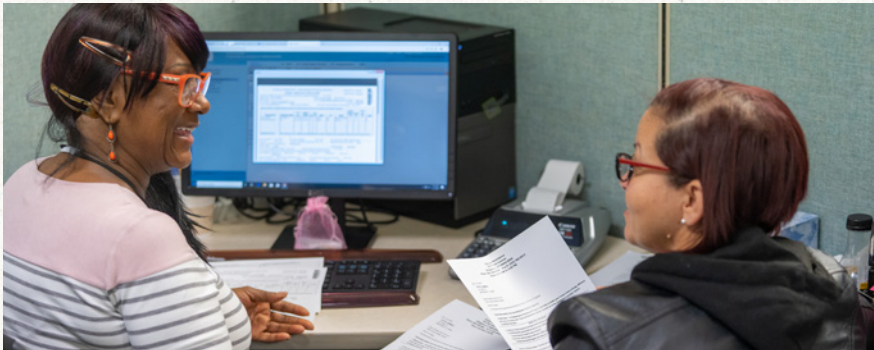
ENGAGING FAMILIES

The Early Learning Division understands the significant role parents play in their child's life and view them as partners in the educational process. Our family engagement program focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building with key family members in a child's life and is also inclusive of pregnant women and expectant families, mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other adult caregivers. Alliance strives to engage families by offering a variety of activities, training, family events, and workshops. All families also have access to individualized family support services and mental health services for the entire family.



Energy Assistance

Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) is designed to help eligible households pay for their winter heating bills. Alliance Inc. serves the following towns: Bridgeport, Stratford, Trumbull, Monroe, Fairfield, Easton, Norwalk and Westport. The CEAP program helps our clients with deliverable fuels and utility heating sources. Home owners and renters may apply. If applicant is home-bound, disabled and/or elderly, our staff provides home visit assistance.



OUR ANNUAL IMPACT

10,575

TOTAL
NUMBER OF
HOUSEHOLDS



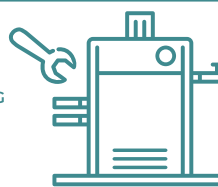
9,065

HOUSEHOLDS
OBTAINED
SERVICES



205

HOMES GOT A
FURNACE CLEANING
TEST, & TUNING



31

HOUSEHOLDS
RECEIVED SMALL
FURNACE REPAIRS



SERVICES PROVIDED

Under the Energy Assistance Program there are several programs that households may be eligible for, and one application covers all programs.

- **CEAP:** This is a benefit applied toward primary heating source during the winter months. Households with income up to 60% of the State Median Income (SMI) guidelines are eligible for this service.
- **Basic benefits for renters with heat included in the rent:** This assistance is for household up to 150% (FPL) guidelines or those whose rent is over 30% of their gross income.
- **Aquarion program** helps qualified households with up to \$50 of their water bills
- **Matching Payment Plan (MPP)** helps our eligible households to enroll in the winter protection program with utility companies.
- **Heating System Repair/ Replacement (HRR)** provides repairs and/or replacement of a heating system for qualified owner-occupied dwellings.
- **Operation Fuel** assists qualified households (up to 75% SMI) with heating bills, utility bills, heating system, and water heater repair/ replacement.

Supportive Services

The Self-Sufficiency Supportive Services Department (SSSS) is designed to provide support services to individuals and families in order to obtain and maintain self-sufficiency.

In collaboration with our partners, SSSS provided over 500 families with one-time food assistance. Over 250 families benefited from our clothing & shoe giveaway events.



OUR ANNUAL IMPACT

1,438

NUMBER OF
INDIVIDUALS
SERVED



230

INDIVIDUALS
HELPED BY
COORDINATION
AND ADVOCACY



292

HOUSEHOLDS
ASSISTED WITH
HOUSING



40%

OF HOUSEHOLDS
MAINTAINED
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING FOR
180 DAYS



370

HOUSEHOLDS
ASSISTED WITH
UTILITIES



47%

OF HOUSEHOLDS
AVOIDED
EVICTION



SERVICES PROVIDED

To empower our communities, the Supportive Services Department provides:

- **Housing assistance** (rent payment, landlord mediation)
- **Utility assistance** (bill payment, mediation)
- **Employment search** (resume development, job search)
- **GED / HS diploma**
- **DSS pre-application assistance** (SNAP / Health Insurance, TANF)
- **Financial literacy education** (household budgeting, saving, credit building)
- **Free tax preparation assistance**
- **Case management**
- **Information and referral services**
- **Computer training**



Youth Services

LIGHTHOUSE IN THE COMMUNITY

The purpose of the Lighthouse programs is “to provide a safe environment that complements school day learning and fosters intellectual, artistic, cultural, physical, social and emotional development of children by partnering with and supporting the efforts of family, school and community. Children, youth and adults are provided opportunities to become independent lifetime learners, as well as innovative, creative and productive citizens.” Alliance’s 10 assigned schools are: Blackham, Black Rock, Cesar Batalla, Curiale, Discovery Magnet, Geraldine Johnson, Hallen, Jettie S. Tisdale, Roosevelt and John Winthrop serving over 1,600 students throughout the city. A Before School program is offered at 7 of 10 schools. The Program provides homework assistance and offers activities and classes such as arts and crafts, ballroom dancing, skating, lacrosse, karate, Japanese, Chinese, sign-language, swimming, STEM, Maritime Center and tennis with the USTA, culminating with an end-of-year show at the Klein Memorial Auditorium where the talent of Bridgeport’s children is presented live on stage.

The Bridgeport Youth Club - Inspire Motivate Prepare Accelerate Creative Teens (BYC IMPACT) for 7th and 8th grade students is a popular component of the Lighthouse Program. Under the guidance of the BYC Supervisor, students plan and participate in activities and contribute to community service projects.

Family Literacy Nights continue to be offered once a month at each site with diverse activities such as: health/wellness and nutrition, painting projects, Zumba, Literacy/Science/Math Nights, and father/daughter and mother/son dances. This year, after school leaders have been trained in a social-emotional program for our BYC students, thanks to the Tauck Foundation’s support of this effort.



Past Scholar



SHADEA' MILAN FOSTER, ICU Cardiac Registered Nurse

Shadea' Milan Foster is currently an ICU cardiac registered nurse at Yale New Haven Hospital. Shadea's journey to a successful career started as a Head Start student while attending the ABCD Head Start program located at Johnson Academy in Stratford. Shadea' attended Notre Dame of Fairfield High School and Fairfield University. While attending these institutions Shadea' received many academic scholarship awards such as the President's Award for Academic Excellence, Honor Roll, National Honor Society and Dean's list while attending Fairfield University's Nursing Program. Shadea's most memorable award was receiving the Certificate of Scholarship for Academic Excellence in the Nursing program as the only African American Student. Shadea' has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Fairfield University. While employed at Yale her accolades continue with numerous awards. Shadea's inspiration comes from the scripture which simply says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" which she was taught at an early age by her grandmother and her mother!

Community Awardees



DR. HOSAM AFIFI, Co-Founder of Bridgeport Islamic Community Center

It isn't often you hear of a Bridgeport community member who is a well-established global businessman and uses that executive leadership status to enhance his community. Dr. Hosam Afifi is the co-founder of the Bridgeport Islamic Community Center and has over 40 years of progressive leadership and management experience. Dr. Afifi's contribution to the community through a food pantry and soup kitchen speaks volumes for his generous and considerate spirit. His contributions to Alliance are numerous, and we gladly thank him for associating himself with us throughout our objective to address the root causes of poverty within Connecticut.



DOROTHY J. BROWN, Owner of D.B. Catering

Dorothy Brown has been a community legend in Bridgeport for the past 35 years. From an early age, Mrs. Brown learned to cook and enjoyed preparing meals for her family. She later established her own catering business, D.B. Catering. She prides herself on making sure every dish is made with love, from taste to presentation. Mrs. Brown is also an active member of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church and uses her gift of ministry as Director of the "Kitchen of Hope" feeding program. Motivated by a desire to help families in need, she volunteers her time serving the Bridgeport community. This has been her life's joy for 18 years. Mrs. Brown has been referred to as a "Hometown Hero" by the City of Bridgeport.

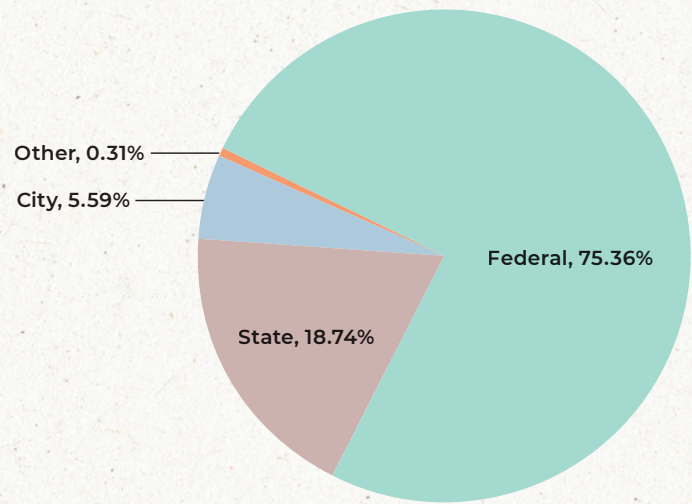


DOUG WADE, Owner and CEO of Wade's Dairy, Inc.

Doug Wade is a fourth-generation family member proudly leading the Wade's Dairy brand. The family business has been providing fresh milk to Americans since 1893. With the business being headquartered in Bridgeport, Doug Wade is deeply involved in community efforts including his service on the Board of Directors for the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, The Fairfield Half Marathon, and the Juneteenth Celebration. Mr. Wade also publicly advocates for those most in need and strongly promotes efforts to reduce poverty, provide quality education, and restore this country to the land of opportunity. Doug Wade believes in second chance hiring and has made exceptional contributions to ABCD, Inc. over the years. We are grateful for his generosity and thoughtfulness.

Agency Budget

2019 – 2020



FEDERAL

CT Energy Assistance Program (Passed through The State)	\$11,173,323
Community Services Block Grant (Passed through The State)	\$1,132,586
Social Services Block Grant (Passed through The State)	\$153,979
Human Services Infrastructure (Passed through The State)	\$221,534
FEMA (Federal grant passed through The United Way)	\$11,926
CDBG / ESG Grants (Federal grant passed through The City)	\$61,508
Head Start	\$5,309,075
Trumbull / Monroe	\$231,387
Early Head Start	\$2,285,249

TOTAL \$20,580,568

STATE

Human Services Infrastructure	\$502,276
State Head Start	\$496,278
Therapeutic Child Care	\$303,101
Child Day Care	\$2,420,099
School Readiness	\$1,395,875

TOTAL \$5,117,629

CITY

Youth Services Program	\$1,526,861
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TOTAL \$1,526,861

OTHER

Southern CT Gas Company	\$75,000
Neighbors Helping Neighbors	\$10,000

TOTAL \$85,000

Community Partners

Administration for Children & Families	Peter DiNardo Enterprises	Securitas Security Company
ADP, LLC	Dress for Success	SHRM
ADT	Early Childhood Alliance	Sikorsky Credit Union
American Red Cross	Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP)	SKANE
Arthur J. Gallagher & Company	Easton Senior Center	Social Security Administration
AT&T	Eisenhower Senior Center	Southern Connecticut Gas Company
Books A Million, #894	Fairfield College Preparatory School	Southwest Community Health Center
Bridgeport Board of Education	Fairfield County Community Foundation	State of CT Department of Children & Families
Bridgeport Community Islamic Center	Fairfield University School of Nursing	State of CT Department of Social Services
Bridgeport Department of Social Services	Fones School of Dental Hygiene	State of CT – DSS Child Support Enforcement
Bridgeport Fire Department	Hall Neighborhood House	Stepping Stones
Bridgeport Health Department	Hispanic Information & Telecommunication Network (HITN)	Stratford Board of Education
Bridgeport Hospital	Holy Name of Jesus	Stratford Health Department
Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust	Housatonic Community College	Stratford Parents Place
Bridgeport Prospers	Indeed.com	Stratford Public Library
Bridgeport Rescue Mission	Info Line 211	Stratford South End Community Center
Bridgeport Veteran Affairs	Jewish Family Services of Stamford, Inc.	Tauk Foundation
Captain Systems	Lakeshore	TD Bank
Career Resources	LifeBridge	The Books for Kids Foundation
Caroline House	Lions KidSight USA	The Center for Family Justice
Chapin Hall @ University of Chicago	Literacy Volunteers	The Connection, Inc.
Child & Family Guidance	Maritime Odyssey Preschool	The WorkPlace, Inc.
Child First	Me & The Boyz	Town of Stratford
City of Bridgeport	Minority Business Association	Town of Westport
City of Bridgeport Housing & Community Development	Monroe Senior Center	Trumbull Board of Education
City of Bridgeport Department of Health & Social Services	Monster.com	Trumbull Social Services
City of Norwalk	Music Together	United Illuminating Company
Colonial Life	Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company	United Way
Community Health Network of CT, Inc.	New England Head Start Association	University of Bridgeport
Concentra	New Hope Missionary Baptist Church	US Department of Health & Human Services
Connecticut Association for Community Action	Office of Early Childhood	Verizon Wireless Foundation
Connecticut Association of Foster & Adoption Families, Inc.	Operation Fuel	Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS)	Operation Hope	VOYA Financial Services
Connecticut Basket Brigade	Optimus Health Care, Inc.	W. B. Mason
Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness	Panera	Women, Infant & Children (WIC)
Connecticut Department of Labor	Park City Communities	Workers' Compensation Trust
Connecticut Food Bank	Partnership for Early Education Research (PEER)	Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence
Connecticut Head Start Association	People's United Bank	Yale Hospital
Connecticut Institute for Refugees & Immigrants	Person to Person	Yale University
	Principal Financial	YMCA Alpha Community Services (Norwalk / Westport)
	Sacred Heart University	

Thank You!

**WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT BY THE FOLLOWING:**





Folson Almezy
American View Productions
A-Preferred Roofing & Contracting
Bagel King of Bridgeport
Becker's School Supplies
Bigelow Tea Company
BlumShapiro
Maritza Bond
Boys & Girls Village, Inc.
Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders
Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative
Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust
Cardinal Shehan Center
Cater Fresh
Crunch Fitness
DiBella's Subs
Edward J. Dillon & Son Florists
Elements of Illusion
Fairfield College Preparatory School
Fairfield County Community Foundation
Five Star Pizza
Frankie's Diner
Fruta Juice Bar
Arthur J. Gallagher & Company
Monisha Gibson
Goldman Sachs
Gross Family Foundation
Derwin K. Hill
Hip Hop 1001
Hub & Spoke
Hug Time/Coffee Time
Hunan Pan
IT Direct
Sharon Skyers Jenkins

Jessica Johnson
Ralph Jowers
Joseph Kaliko
Kiffy Naturals
Kyocera
Lakeshore
LifeBridge
Lindley Food Services
Maritime Chevrolet
Me & The Boyz
Merit Rentals, LLC
Jeff & Mercedes Mullins
New England Recreation Group
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
NUOVO Packaging
Olivia's Juice Bar
Optimus Health Care
Porky's Café
Prestige Commercial Cleaning
Edwin Rivera
Securitas
Service Rite Electric
Showcase Cinema
Southern Connecticut Ice & Oil
Stress Factory
Teach for America
The Klein Memorial Auditorium
The WorkPlace
Valvoline
Vazanno's Four Seasons
Wade's Dairy
W. B. Mason
Keith Williams



ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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