

# Building Assets & Financial Security: Mapping Opportunities in Bridgeport



Connecticut Association for Human Services

## **Connecticut Association for Human Services**

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The Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) is a statewide organization that works to reduce poverty, strengthen families, and reconnect communities through advocacy supported by outreach, research, and education.

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# **Building Assets & Financial Security: Mapping Opportunities in Bridgeport**

**CAHS**  
Published by  
Connecticut Association for Human Services, Inc.

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## Introduction

The Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) created this guide in an effort to increase access and awareness of existing community programs that help families save and invest money.

We hope case managers and service providers will use this resource in conjunction with our publications *Your Family's Money: Simple Ways to Build a Better Future*, *Your Family's Money II: Managing Debt and Credit*, and *Your Client's Money: Practical Tools Promote Family Economic Success*. It is our vision that individuals will use these community programs to build assets for their families' futures. We wish to thank the organizations included in this book for their cooperation and collaboration in providing information on the following asset building programs.

Additional copies of this Bridgeport guide and editions for Hartford and Waterbury are available by contacting CAHS at (860) 951-2212 ext. 222, [info@cahs.org](mailto:info@cahs.org), or online at [www.cahs.org](http://www.cahs.org).

# Mapping Opportunities in Bridgeport

## Table of Contents

<b>BANKING</b> .....	1
Banking 101: Using Checking & Savings Accounts .....	2
Local Banks & Credit Unions .....	3
<b>CREDIT COUNSELING</b> .....	4
Consumer Credit Counseling Services (CCCS/MMI) .....	5
University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Systems .....	6
<b>FINANCIAL EDUCATION</b> .....	7
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) .....	8
Center for Financial Education (CCCS/MMI) .....	9
Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P) .....	10
Consumer Credit Counseling Services (CCCS/MMI) .....	11
FSW, Inc. ....	12
Money Conference for Women .....	13
University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System .....	14
<b>HOMEOWNERSHIP</b> .....	15
ACORN Housing.....	16
Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, Inc. ....	17
City of Bridgeport .....	18
Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) .....	19
Connecticut Housing Investment Fund, Inc. (CHIF) .....	20
Consumer Credit Counseling Services (CCCS/MMI) .....	21
Faith Community Development Corporation .....	22
Habitat of Coastal Fairfield County .....	23
Housing Development Fund .....	24
Housing Education Resource Center (HERC) .....	25
Mutual Housing Association of Southwestern Connecticut, Inc. ....	26
People’s Bank .....	27
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) .....	28
<b>INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS (IDAs)</b> .....	29
ABCD, INC.....	30
FSW, INC.....	31
<b>GLOSSARY</b> .....	32

# BANKING

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The following information outlines how to manage and save money, the advantages of using checking and savings accounts, and where to find banks and credit unions in the greater Bridgeport area. Classes on using banks or credit unions can be found under the *Financial Education* section of this guide.

# Banking 101: Using Checking & Savings Accounts

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## What is a Checking Account?

Most banks and credit unions offer free or low-cost checking accounts. These accounts allow people to keep their money in a safe, insured location and offer different ways to manage money. With a checking or savings account banks will cash checks and automatically deposit a check into an account for free.

Also many banks provide “starter” checks allowing access to a checking account until printed checks arrive (generally, printed checks are free unless the account holder orders a special color or design). After opening a checking account banks will also issue a debit card, which makes it possible to have money readily accessible without carrying large amounts of cash.

Lastly, banks send monthly statements of all transactions, such as deposits, cashed checks, ATM withdrawals, account fees, and even interest accrued, so it is easy to keep track of what has been spent and saved.

## What is a Savings Account?

Like checking accounts, many savings accounts offered by banks and credit unions are free with no minimum balance. Unlike most checking accounts, savings accounts will earn small amount of interest. **This means that even a small amount saved regularly will build up!**

***Note:** If an individual is on a ChexSystems List, some banks will allow these individuals to open a starter savings account.*

## Other Advantages to Checking & Savings Accounts:

When an individual files a federal income tax return at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site or online and chooses to directly deposit the federal or state return, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) can deposit the tax refund directly into an individual’s checking or savings account. A direct deposit refund takes half the time of a refund by mail.

Banks and credit unions offer other services such as homeownership programs and low-interest loans and can be very helpful in suggesting additional investment options. Individuals should ask about any fees or minimum balances that might apply.

## What to Look for in a Bank or Credit Union:

- ★ Talk to different banks and credit unions to see what services are offered in addition to savings and checking accounts.
- ★ Compare services offered by different banks and credit unions.
- ★ Remember that credit unions often restrict membership to individuals who work for a specific company, live or work in a particular region, or worship at a local church.

# Local Banks & Credit Unions

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## Greater Bridgeport Banks

Bank of America .....	1-800-841-4000
Chase Bank .....	1-800-242-7324
Citizens Bank .....	1-800-922-9999
Commerce Bank .....	1-888-751-9000
Community's Bank .....	(203) 579-3030
People's Bank .....	1-800-772-1090
Sovereign Bank .....	1-877-SOV-BANK
TD Banknorth .....	1-800-428-7000
Wachovia .....	1-800-922-4684
Webster Bank .....	1-800-325-2424

## Greater Bridgeport Credit Unions

Bridgeport City Employees Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 576-7156
Bridgeport Fairfield Teachers Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 576-0554
Bridgeport Fire Department Employees Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 374-8120
Bridgeport Hospital Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 384-3094
Bridgeport Police Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 374-6500
Bridgeport Post Office Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 367-4518
Connecticut Energy Employees Credit Union .....	(203) 394-6538
East End Baptist Tabernacle Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 333-3036
General Electric Employees Credit Union .....	1-800-992-8472
Fairfield County Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 324-2144
First Baptist Church Federal Credit Union .....	(203) 378-9228
Housatonic Teachers Federal Credit Union.....	(203) 378-7503
Sikorsky Financial Credit Union.....	1-888-753-5553

**Call for more information on branch locations, membership restrictions,  
or fees associated with checking and savings accounts.**

# CREDIT COUNSELING

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There are many Connecticut agencies that provide credit counseling and debt management services. Several programs listed in the Financial Education section of this booklet also teach money management, skills needed to avoid debt, and how to build good credit.

Care should be taken when choosing a debt management or consolidation plan. These plans may look like the best options for overcoming debt, but they often cost money and may lead to increased debt. For more information and a list of questions to ask when dealing with a debt management agency, go to the Federal Trade Commission's website found at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/fiscal.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/fiscal.htm) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP.

**CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICES**, a division of Money Management International (CCCS/MMI)

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**Location:** 61 Cherry Street, 2nd Floor, Milford, CT 06460  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a representative  
**Hours of Operation:** Operators available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
**Telephone:** 1-866-889-9347 (toll free)  
**Website:** www.moneymanagement.org *and* www.creditcounseling.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions

**Languages:** English, Spanish, ASL, Arabic, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, French, German, Greek, Malaysian, Laotian, Philippino, Polish, Samoan, Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Yugoslavian, Syrian, Vietnamese

**Program Description:** Consumer Credit Counseling Services offers over-the-phone and in person credit counseling, as well as debt management and consolidation plans. An individual can make an appointment with a counselor at one of five offices to learn how to manage personal debt. Over-the-phone and one-on-one credit counseling are free.

*There are nominal fees for debt management plans, which are offered when appropriate and realistic for a person who has already received credit counseling.*

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling (p. 5)
- Financial Literacy/Education (p.11)
- Homeownership (p. 21)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT (UCONN) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

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**Location:** Statewide, focusing on eastern and western Connecticut  
**Contacts:** Lynne Grant; Faye Griffiths-Smith  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am-5 pm  
**Telephone:** (203) 207-3263 - Lynne Grant ; (203) 407-3160 - Faye Griffiths-Smith  
**E-mail:** Extension@uconn.edu  
**Website:** www.canr.uconn.edu/ces

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions; workshops designed to train service providers, not individuals

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** UCONN Cooperative Extension Centers offer financial education training in collaboration with Connecticut businesses and community organizations. Past programs have included *Financial Fitness Checkup*, *Take the Road to Financial Security in Later Life*, *Parents, Kids and Money*, and *Financial Facts of Life*.

Call to schedule a workshop providing the skills needed to teach money and debt management or to find out more information about other available programs.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling (p. 6)
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 14)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: Family and Child Nutrition Education Programs

# FINANCIAL EDUCATION

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Financial counseling and educational programs are offered by many nonprofits in Connecticut. These programs range from workshops geared toward a specific person's or group's financial needs to individual budget counseling provided over the phone.

## AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS (AARP)

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**Location:** 21 Oak Street, Suite 104, Hartford, CT 06106-8002  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a Representative  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 7 am- Midnight  
**Telephone:** 1-866-295-7279 (toll free); 1-800-994-9422 (CT Benefit Outreach Program)  
**E-mail:** ctaarp@aarp.org  
**Website:** www.aarp.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** AARP offers a money management program for seniors, which includes budget counseling, bill-paying volunteer services, and appointed “representative” payee services when a client is no longer capable of managing his/her income.

In collaboration with local agencies, AARP also offers the Connecticut Benefit Outreach Program, which assists low-income seniors in finding resources to help pay for housing, food, utilities, and prescription drugs.

Contact the local AARP office for more information on services.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 8)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** 111 Founders Plaza, Suite 1400, East Hartford, CT 06108-3212

**Contacts:** Sheryle McMillan

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am - 5 pm

**Telephone:** 1-888-845-5669, ext. 3138 (toll free) - Sheryle McMillan

**Website:** www.crediteducation.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions

**Languages:** English

**Program Description:** The Center for Financial Education offers free financial and homebuyer education classes to the public. Class topics have included homebuyer education, budget basics, Credit Smart, credit scoring, identity theft, and personal financial management.

**The Center also offers money management training to nonprofit providers who want to become certified financial education teachers.**

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 9)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONNECTICUT LIGHT AND POWER COMPANY (CL&P)

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**Location:** 107 Selden Street, Berlin, CT 06037 (or mail to P.O. Box 270, Hartford, CT 06141-0270)  
**Contact:** Community Relations Department  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 8:30 am - 4:30 pm  
**Telephone:** (860) 721-4007  
**Website:** www.cl-p.com

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions, although programs target low-income residents

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** The *Money Matters Program* teaches participants how to manage household income and reduce their overall energy burden. These workshops are free and are held at nonprofit agencies across the state.

An organization can set up a workshop or make a reservation by calling CL&P's Community Relations Department. Additional information is also available by calling 2-1-1 INFOLINE.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 10)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Matching Payment Plan, NUSTART, Weatherization, Winter Protection Program, WRAP) (p.29)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSUMER CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICE**, a division of Money Management International (CCCS/MMI)

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**Locations:** 61 Cherry Street, 2nd Floor, Milford, CT 06460  
**Contacts:** Call to speak with a representative  
**Hours of Operation:** Operators available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
**Telephone:** 1-866-889-9347 (toll free) or 1-800-208-2227 (toll free)  
**Website:** www.moneymanagement.org *and* www.creditcounseling.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions

**Languages:** English, Spanish, ASL, Arabic, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, French, German, Greek, Malaysian, Laotian, Philippino, Polish, Samoan, Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Yugoslavian, Syrian, Vietnamese

**Program Description:** Consumer Credit Counseling Services offers over-the-phone and in person credit counseling, as well as debt management and consolidation plans. An individual can make an appointment with a counselor at one of five offices to learn how to manage personal debt. Over-the-phone and one-on-one credit counseling are free.

*There are nominal fees for debt management plans, which are offered when appropriate and realistic for a person who has already received credit counseling.*

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling (p. 5)
- Financial Literacy/Education (p.11)
- Homeownership (p. 21)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** 475 Clinton Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06605

**Contact:** Director of Family Assets, LLC

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am-5 pm

**Telephone:** (203) 368-4291

**Website:** www.fswinc.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions

**Languages:** English, Spanish, American Sign Language (interpreters available)

**Program Description:** FSW offers ongoing individual budget counseling and group workshops on money management and other financial education topics. Group programs are designed upon request and are tailored to fit a specific group's needs. Past programs have included *Understanding and Reestablishing Credit*, *Youth Financial Fitness*, and *Personal Money Management*.

For budget counseling or to request a workshop call and ask for Family Assets. Additional FSW, Inc. locations in Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Stratford, and Trumbull.

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 12)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) (p. 31)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: Micro-lending for small businesses

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: Elderly Services; Meals on Wheels; Mental Health Services

## MONEY CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

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**Location:** Hartford  
**Contacts:** Carol Heller, Connecticut State Treasurer's Office  
**Conference**  
**Date 2006:** See State Treasurer's website below for 2007 conference dates.  
**Telephone:** (860) 702-3146 or 1-800-618-3404 (toll free) - Carol Heller  
**E-mail:** moneyconference@ywcahartford.org  
**Websites:** www.state.ct.us/ott/financialeducationconf.htm *and* www.ctmoneyconferenceforwomen.com

**Eligibility Requirements:** Open to women of all economic backgrounds

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** The Money Conference for Women is an annual event that is sponsored by the Office of the State Treasurer and the YWCA of Hartford. This conference offers a variety of workshops for working women in the community. Held annually in Hartford, past conferences focused on *Youth and Financial Education, Family Economic Success, Latino Personal Finance and Wealth-Building, and the Connecticut Sullivan Financial Education Program.*

Workshop topics have included retirement planning, getting out of debt, money management, home buying, basics of investing, borrowing, and planning for college.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 13)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT (UCONN) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

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**Location:** Statewide, focusing on eastern and western Connecticut  
**Contacts:** Lynne Grant; Faye Griffiths-Smith  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F: 9 am-5 pm  
**Telephone:** (203) 207-3263 - Lynne Grant; (203) 407-3160 - Faye Griffiths-Smith  
**E-mail:** Extension@uconn.edu  
**Website:** www.canr.uconn.edu/ccs

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions; workshops designed to train service providers, not individuals

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** UCONN Cooperative Extension Centers offer financial education training in collaboration with Connecticut businesses and community organizations. Past programs have included *Financial Fitness Checkup*, *Take the Road to Financial Security in Later Life*, *Parents, Kids and Money*, and *Financial Facts of Life*.

Call to schedule a workshop providing the skills needed to teach money and debt management or to find out more information about other available programs.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling (p. 6)
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 14)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: Family and Child Nutrition Education Programs

# HOMEOWNERSHIP

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One of the first steps to homeownership or responsible renting is becoming aware of local education and financial assistance programs. In Connecticut, many nonprofit and state agencies offer homeownership and financial education classes, which may lead to low-interest mortgages, or financial assistance with down payments, closing costs, and foreclosure prevention.

## ACORN HOUSING

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**Location:** 2310 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Bridgeport, CT 06606  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a representative  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am-5 pm  
**Telephone:** (203) 366-4180  
**E-mail:** ctacorn@acorn.org  
**Website:** www.acornhousing.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** Low or moderate income

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** ACORN holds group information sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 pm. After this initial intake, clients meet one-on-one with a counselor to go over credit, income, and savings. After a credit check, ACORN counselors create a housing counseling plan to prepare clients for homeownership.

Case managers offer credit counseling, budgeting, and then refer clients to a collaborating bank with the lowest interest rates possible. In addition to these services, ACORN offers pre- and post- purchase counseling, as well as home improvement and rehabilitation counseling, mortgage delinquency and default resolution counseling and loss mitigation.

Call to sign up for an information session and to learn about any specific eligibility requirements for Bridgeport. ACORN's services are free.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 16)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDA)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## BRIDGEPORT NEIGHBORHOOD TRUST, INC.

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**Location:** 177 State Street, 5th Floor, Bridgeport, CT 06604  
**Contact:** Emilia Diaz  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am-5 pm  
**Telephone:** (203) 332-7977, ext.101- Emilia Diaz  
**E-mail:** emilia@bnfbnt.org  
**Website:** www.commcap.org/bnt

**Eligibility Requirements:** Low or moderate income

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust (BNT) offers pre-purchase counseling, budget and credit counseling, as well as a homebuyer education program to prepare clients for homeownership.

In partnership with local organizations BNT also develops affordable housing in Bridgeport.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 17)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDA)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: Affordable housing development

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT

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**Location:** 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport CT 06604  
**Contact:** Housing and Community Development Office  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am-5 pm  
**Telephone:** (203) 576-7134  
**E-mail:** KabelA0@ci.bridgeport.ct.us  
**Website:** www.ci.bridgeport.ct.us/newdepartments/housing\_comm\_dev/default.aspx

**Eligibility Requirements:** Low or moderate income

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** The City of Bridgeport offers several programs for first-time homebuyers. Residents interested in purchasing a home in the lower East End of Bridgeport can receive up to a \$10,000 match toward a down payment or closing costs. Interested participants must attend a homeownership class. Upon completion of the class participants receive a certificate, which is good for one year.

***There is a \$35 fee for the homeownership class.***

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 18)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## CONNECTICUT HOUSING FINANCE AUTHORITY (CHFA)

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**Location:** 999 West Street, Rocky Hill, CT  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a representative  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 8:30 am- 5 pm  
**Telephone:** (860) 571-3502  
**E-mail:** info@chfa.org  
**Website:** www.chfa.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions, however, CHFA places restrictions on cost of the home based on its location within the state.

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** CHFA offers a variety of homeownership programs that help Connecticut residents finance home purchases. These programs include: *Homebuyer Mortgages; Down payment Assistance Loans; Rehabilitation Mortgage Loans; Home of Your Own (HOYO); Military Homeownership; Teachers Mortgage Assistance; Police Homeownership; Apartment Conversion for the Elderly; and Section 8 Housing Choice Homeownership Programs.*

CHFA also offers free counseling sessions to Connecticut residents who are CHFA borrowers or who are looking for more information on home buying. These classes include financial education and credit counseling.

Call for more detailed information on the requirements of each CHFA program or to register for a counseling class.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 19)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONNECTICUT HOUSING INVESTMENT FUND, INC. (CHIF)**

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**Location:** 121 Tremont Street, Hartford, CT 06105  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a representative  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 8:30 am- 5 pm  
**Telephone:** (860) 233-5165 ext. 2019; 1-800-992-3665  
**E-mail:** loans@chif.org  
**Website:** www.chif.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** Call for eligibility guidelines.

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** The Connecticut Housing Investment Fund (CHIF) offers the Energy Conservation Loan Program for Connecticut single and multi-family homeowners. This program provides the opportunity for homeowners to borrow between \$2,000-\$60,000 for the purchase and installation of cost-saving energy improvements. Eligible home improvements include automatic set-back thermostats, siding, caulking and weatherstripping, insulation, heat pumps, replacement roofs, and heating systems.

In collaboration with People’s Bank, CHIF also offers a Home Improvement Loan Program for homeowners who want to repair or renovate their homes.

For more information or to download an application for a program go to CHIF’s website.

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 20)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** 61 Cherry Street, 2nd Floor, Milford, CT 06460  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a representative  
**Hours of Operation:** Operators available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
**Telephone:** 1-866-515-2227 (toll free)  
**Website:** www.moneymanagement.org *and* www.creditcounseling.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions

**Languages:** English, Spanish, ASL, Arabic, Cantonese, Chinese, Czech, French, German, Greek, Malaysian, Laotian, Philippino, Polish, Samoan, Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Yugoslavian, Syrian, Vietnamese

**Program Description:** Consumer Credit Counseling Services offers pre-purchase, post-purchase, reverse mortgage, and foreclosure prevention counseling. As well as, home financing in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Fannie Mae, and Freddy Mac.

Other homeowner services include: home equity conversion, mortgage delinquency, and default resolution counseling, homebuyer education, loss mitigation, and renter's assistance. CCCS offers free financial education and over-the-phone or one-on-one credit counseling. **Debt management and some housing services have fees.**

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling (p. 5)
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 11)
- Homeownership (p. 21)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**FAITH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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**Location:** 401A Bird Street, Stratford, CT 06615

**Contact:** Bridgette Russell or Irene Long

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am-5 pm

**Telephone:** (203) 502-7632

**Email:** info@faithcdc.net

**Website:** http://faithcdc.net

**Eligibility Requirements:** Program targets low- to moderate-income minorities and immigrants in Stratford and Bridgeport.

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** In collaboration with Freddie Mac, the City of Stratford, the City of Bridgeport, and area churches and community development corporations, Faith Community Development Corporation (CDC) offers the Home Ownership Made Easy (H.O.M.E) program. The program offers Freddie Mac's *CreditSmart* financial education classes, pre-purchase and post-purchase counseling, and low-down payment mortgages through Chase Home Finance. Faith CDC also provides homeownership classes for the City of Bridgeport's \$25,000 down payment and closing cost assistance grant program.

For more information and to register for upcoming homebuyer education and *CreditSmart* workshops contact a representative at the Faith CDC.

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 22)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: Basic computer training

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## HABITAT OF COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY

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**Location:** 1470 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06640

**Contact:** Family Services Office

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 8:30 am– 4:30 pm

**Telephone:** (203) 333-2642

**E-mail:** info@habitatcfc.org

**Website:** www.habitatcfc.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** Call for income guidelines for Greater Bridgeport.

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** Habitat for Humanity offers assistance in funding and building homes for families. Program participants are required to put in 400 hours of sweat equity or time spent assisting in the construction of their homes or another Habitat house, have a sufficient income to repay a no-interest mortgage, and show interest in partnering with Habitat in the construction of the home.

Prior to homeownership Habitat requires participants attend workshops on budgeting, homeownership, and conflict resolution. For more information about Habitat programs or how to apply for homeownership assistance contact the Family Services Office.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 23)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: Youth Build (construction training and educational development)

## HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUND

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**Location:** 100 Prospect Street, Suite S-101, Plaza Level, Stamford, CT 06901  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a Housing Counselor  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am– 5 pm  
**Telephone:** (203) 969-1830  
**Website:** www.hdf-ct.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** Eligibility based on median income guidelines, call for more information.

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** The Housing Development Fund (HDF) offers the following counseling and homeownership education services: individual homeownership counseling, CHFA eligible homeownership education classes, down payment assistance, SmartMove Homeownership, Adopt a House, gap financing, and closing cost assistance loans.

HDF hosts monthly orientations in Bridgeport and weekly orientations in Stamford and Danbury. Call for more information on dates and locations.

**Note: There is a \$20.00 fee that is used to pay for a client's credit report. All other services are free.**

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 24)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## HOUSING EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER (HERC)

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**Location:** 901 Wethersfield Avenue, Hartford, CT 06114  
**Contact:** Karin Nigol  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am- 5 pm; Housing Counseling Hotline: T-F; 9 am- 5 pm  
**Telephone:** (860) 296-4242, ext. 101- Karin Nigol  
**E-mail:** KarinN@HERC-inc.org  
**Website:** <http://ursamajor.hartnet.org/herc/home.asp>

**Eligibility Requirements:** Low or moderate income

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** HERC offers housing counseling (including pre-purchase, post-purchase, and mortgage delinquency counseling) daily on an informational landlord tenant hotline, as well in an individual or group seminar setting.

In addition, HERC hosts classes on homeowner education and predatory lending awareness for CHFA homeowners. Also, HERC operates the North Central Mobility Program for Northern and Central Connecticut residents who participate in the State Department of Social Services (DSS) rental subsidy voucher program.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 25)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## MUTUAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT, INC.

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**Location:** 434 Maplewood Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06605  
23 Leonard Street, Norwalk, CT 06850  
63 Stillwater Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902

**Contact:** Carol Sydnor, Director of Homeownership Programs

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am– 5 pm

**Telephone:** (203) 359-6940

**E-mail:** infor@mhaswct.org

**Website:** www.mhaswct.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** Varies based on program

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** The Mutual Housing Association (MHA) offers a wide range of services for first-time homebuyers, individuals interested in purchasing property, and homeowners who are facing financial hardships. Services include: homebuyer training, down payment and closing cost assistance, affordable mortgages programs, financial education, foreclosure prevention, and *Su Llave*, which targets homeownership in Latino communities.

To learn more about programs go to the Mutual Housing website above or call to speak with a Housing Counselor. Classes are held every Thursday in Bridgeport and every Tuesday in Norwalk and Stamford.

### Asset Building Services Offered:

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 26)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional Services Provided:

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**PEOPLE'S BANK**

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**Locations:** 850 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604  
3639 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06606  
2600 Madison Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606  
4531 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT 06606  
1450 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06610  
58 Boston Avenue, Shoppers Fair Plaza, Bridgeport, CT 06610  
1728 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

**Contact:** Ask to speak with a representative

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 8 am- 8 pm ; S; 8 am- 12 pm (Branch hours may vary)

**Telephone:** 1-800-772-1090

**Website:** www.peoples.com

**Eligibility Requirements:** No income restrictions

**Languages:** English

**Program Description:** People's Bank provides a free four-part homebuyer education program called "Unlocking the Possibilities of Homeownership." The program covers topics such as qualifying for a mortgage, credit and financial profiles, affordable mortgage programs, applying for a mortgage, and developing a realistic and affordable work plan for homeownership.

Sessions are three hours long with four sessions per program. Upon completion, participants receive a Homebuyer Education Completion Certificate, which may help them qualify for low-cost mortgage programs. Call for class locations and times.

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 27)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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**Location:** Statewide  
**Contact:** Call to speak with a CT employee  
**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 9 am - 5 pm  
**Telephone:** (860) 240-4800  
**E-mail:** CT\_Webmanager@hud.gov  
**Website:** www.hud.gov

**Eligibility Requirements:** Varies based on HUD program and partnering agency

**Languages:** English, Spanish; (May vary)

**Program Description:** The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) insures high-risk loans for low- to moderate-income homebuyers. HUD partners with many local and national agencies to provide housing subsidies to those who meet income guidelines.

**For rental assistance:** [www.hud.gov/local/index.cfm?state=ct&topic=renting](http://www.hud.gov/local/index.cfm?state=ct&topic=renting)

**For homeownership:** [www.hud.gov/local/index.cfmstate=ct&topic=homeownership](http://www.hud.gov/local/index.cfmstate=ct&topic=homeownership)

**For fair housing:** [www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/promotingfh/atyourservice.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/promotingfh/atyourservice.cfm)

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership (p. 28)
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: Provides loans to approved CT lenders

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS (IDAS)**

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The goal of the Connecticut Individual Development Account (IDA) Initiative is to strengthen Connecticut families and communities by offering a unique and effective way to save money. IDAs are matched savings accounts that allow participants' savings to grow quickly and encourage asset building such as through the creation of a small business, pursuit of a post-secondary education, or as a deposit on a house, an apartment, or car.

For more information, contact the Connecticut Department of Labor, 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109-1114. Telephone (860) 263-6794.

**Location:** 1070 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

**Contacts:** Sandy Harden

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 8:30 am– 4:30 pm

**Telephone:** (203) 366– 8241, x 277

**E-mail:** sharden228@hotmail.com

**Website:** www.abcd.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** Participants must have income at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Level; be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); and have less than \$10,000 in assets.

**Languages:** English, Spanish

**Program Description:** ABCD's IDA program offers 15 individuals or families the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Participants are required to attend financial education classes and work one-on-one with a caseworker. Interested individuals who are not selected for an IDA may take advantage of ABCD's Financial Education classes.

Call for a schedule of evening information sessions and to learn more about ABCD's eligibility guidelines.

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) (p. 30)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: Meals on Wheels; Criminal Justice Program; Community Arts; Neighborhood Services

**Location:** 475 Clinton Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06605

**Contacts:** Director of Family Assets, LLC

**Hours of Operation:** M-F; 8 am– 5 pm

**Telephone:** (203) 368-4291

**Website:** www.fswinc.org

**Eligibility Requirements:** Call for income requirements for Greater Bridgeport

**Languages:** English, Spanish, American Sign Language (Interpreters available upon request)

**Program Description:** FSW offers state and federal individual development accounts (IDAs), as well as IDAs for youth participating in FSW’s Youth Business Center. Participants are required to attend an information session, financial education and money management classes, as well as work with a case manager.

Call the Family Assets Department for more information about FSW’s IDA program.

**Asset Building Services Offered:**

- Banking
- Basic Benefit Outreach
- Credit Counseling
- Financial Literacy/Education (p. 12)
- Homeownership
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) (p. 31)
- Job Training
- VITA/AARP Tax Sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Services Provided:**

- Child Care
- Community Employment Services (Life skills/Literacy)
- GED/ESL Classes
- Housing Support, Shelter, Mediation
- Rental/Mortgage Assistance (Eviction Prevention)
- Utility Assistance (CEAP, Weatherization)
- Other: Elderly Services, Meals on Wheels, Mental Health Services

# GLOSSARY

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## COMMUNITY LITERACY PROGRAMS

### ESL (English as a Second Language)

Tutoring programs sponsored by nonprofit agencies to teach English to foreign language speakers.

### GED (General Educational Development)

High school equivalency test, which helps increase the wages of workers who did not graduate from high school.

## UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

### CEAP (Connecticut Energy Assistance Program)

Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) provides energy assistance for low-income families and individuals. Individuals are eligible if they are already participating in Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), State Supplement to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (SSI), Refugee Cash Assistance Program, or Food Stamps, or if their gross income is at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.

#### Matching Payment

This CL&P program provides year-round electric service and possible forgiveness of past-due balances for low-income customers who heat their homes with electricity. The company matches every dollar paid on past due bills up to a zero balance. During last year's heating season, approximately 2,000 customers enrolled in the program and more than \$330,000 in debt was forgiven.

### NUSTART

CL&P helps low-income customers maintain year-round electric service. Customers can reduce and eliminate past-due balances while earning monthly credit on overdue bills. To qualify, customers must have income levels at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, have a past-due balance of \$100 or more on a CL&P bill that is 60 or more days overdue, and agree to pay a monthly budget amount.

### WRAP (Weatherization Residential Assistance Program)

Connecticut Light & Power provides ways to save energy and reduce utility bills during winter months. CL&P will test homes for heating and electrical efficiency, and provide energy-efficient showerheads and fluorescent light bulbs to help save water and electricity. To sign up for WRAP call 1-800-388-9727.

## OTHER

### ChexSystems List

Banks use "ChexSystems" to help determine whether or not a person has a history of mishandling financial accounts. If an individual is on a ChexSystems' list then he or she may not be able to open a checking account. There are steps that can be taken to improve credit status with ChexSystems. For a credit report or dispute information on a ChexSystems report, write to:

ChexSystems  
Attn: Customer Relations  
7805 Hudson Road, Suite 100  
Woodbury, MN 55125

### Debt Consolidation

Debt is combined into a single loan with a fixed rate. Instead of paying multiple creditors who charge different rates at different times of the month, one larger loan is taken out, which pays off all accounts with a single monthly payment. Be sure the costs of the new loan will be less than what is already being paid to different creditors.

### Debt Management Plan (DMP)

The credit counseling agency collects a monthly payment and uses this money to pay their creditors. A debt management plan may or may not be the best way to handle debt. A good credit counselor will help determine whether or not to establish a debt management plan.

## Debt Negotiation

Individuals can negotiate with creditors to set up an affordable payment plan, re-age the debt (or “turn back the clock” to help repair negative credit history), or ask for a lower interest rate on money owed. There are nonprofit credit counseling agencies that help with this negotiation process. For-profit debt negotiators may claim to reduce debt by 50% or erase negative credit history after the debt is paid off, BUT these services have high fees, may fail to reduce total debt owed, and may be illegal.

## Federal Poverty Level/Guidelines

The Federal Poverty Threshold is updated yearly by the Census Bureau and used to statistically represent how many Americans are living in poverty. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) releases Federal Poverty Guidelines as another measure of poverty in America. Federal Poverty Guidelines (or the Federal Poverty Level) is often used to determine financial eligibility for certain federal programs. HHS releases new Federal Poverty Guidelines in the month of February for that year (for example Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2006 were released in February 2006). See chart for 2006 Federal Poverty Guidelines:

FAMILY SIZE	FPG (100%)		125% of FPG		150% of FPG		175% of FPG		185% of FPG		200% of FPG	
	YEAR	MONTH	YEAR	MONTH	YEAR	MONTH	YEAR	MONTH	YEAR	MONTH	YEAR	MONTH
1	\$9,800	\$817	\$12,250	\$1,021	\$14,700	\$1,225	\$17,150	\$1,429	\$18,130	\$1,511	\$19,600	\$1,633
2	\$13,200	\$1,100	\$16,500	\$1,375	\$19,800	\$1,650	\$23,100	\$1,925	\$24,420	\$2,035	\$26,400	\$2,200
3	\$16,600	\$1,383	\$20,750	\$1,729	\$24,900	\$2,075	\$29,050	\$2,421	\$30,710	\$2,559	\$33,200	\$2,767
4	\$20,000	\$1,667	\$25,000	\$2,083	\$30,000	\$2,500	\$35,000	\$2,917	\$37,000	\$3,083	\$40,000	\$3,333
5	\$23,400	\$1,950	\$29,250	\$2,438	\$35,100	\$2,925	\$40,950	\$3,413	\$43,290	\$3,608	\$46,800	\$3,900
6	\$26,800	\$2,233	\$33,500	\$2,792	\$40,200	\$3,350	\$46,900	\$3,908	\$49,580	\$4,132	\$53,600	\$4,467
7	\$30,200	\$2,517	\$37,750	\$3,146	\$45,300	\$3,775	\$52,850	\$4,404	\$55,870	\$4,656	\$60,400	\$5,033
8	\$33,600	\$2,800	\$42,000	\$3,500	\$50,400	\$4,200	\$58,800	\$4,900	\$62,160	\$5,180	\$67,200	\$5,600
*	\$3,400	\$283	\$4,250	\$354	\$5,100	\$425	\$5,950	\$496	\$6,290	\$524	\$6,800	\$567

\*For family units over 8, add the amount shown for each additional member.

Source: Federal Register: January 24, 2006 Volume 71, Number 15, Pages 3848-3849.

## Median Area Income

Median Area Income is another way to determine poverty levels in a given area. Similar to Federal Poverty Guidelines, Median Area Income guidelines can be used to determine eligibility for programs who serve clients with low- to moderate-incomes. If a program uses median area income guidelines to determine eligibility, call for information on specific income levels.

## Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

The VITA program offers free tax help to low- to moderate-income individuals and households. VITA sites use certified community volunteers to help residents file income tax returns including special tax credits, such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child and Dependent Care Credit, and Child Tax Credit. Sites offer electronic filing (e-filing), which shortens the amount of time it takes to receive a tax return. Individuals who e-file and have their refund deposited directly into their bank account will receive it in 8 to 10 days. VITA sites are located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, and other convenient locations. To locate the nearest VITA site dial 2-1-1 INFOLINE, or 1-800-829-1040.



## Connecticut Association for Human Services

110 Bartholomew Avenue, Suite—4030

Hartford, CT 06106

(860) 951-2212