



westbay community action

Helping people. Changing lives.

2024 - 2025 Annual Report

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President's Message

This past January, Westbay Community Action proudly celebrated 59 years of service — over half a century of empowering individuals and families in Kent County and beyond with critical support and resources. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our incredible team of over 100 staff members. Everyday, they go above and beyond to offer a true “hand up” to those in need, delivering essential services like emergency food, utility and rental assistance, childcare, adult education, nutrition, and case management. I couldn't be prouder to have them as part of the Westbay family.

This past year, our community's generosity has been truly inspiring. Local businesses and individuals have once again stepped up, whether through financial contributions, organizing food drives, supporting our holiday programs, or volunteering at our food pantry and farm. Their support fuels our mission, ensuring that our programs continue to meet the growing demand. In 2025, Westbay proudly served over 20,000 individuals across our region.

What sets Westbay apart is our commitment to innovation and responsiveness. As the needs of our community evolve, so do our services. From financial assistance and housing support to workforce development and addressing food insecurity, every program reflects our commitment to meeting people where they are and helping them get where they want to go.

Looking ahead, while the future remains uncertain, one thing is clear: Westbay will be here.

We'll continue to adapt our programs, meet emerging needs, and stand alongside our neighbors every step of the way. Our programs are designed not just to assist in times of crisis, but to close critical gaps in care and provide sustainable pathways forward.

To our dedicated staff, Board of Directors, funders, partners, and supporters, thank you. Your belief in our work enables us to keep “helping people and changing lives.”

Paul A. Salera
President/CEO



The mission of Westbay Community Action, Inc. is to empower and mobilize people through our programs, partnerships, and advocacy to gain greater self-sufficiency.

Senior Management

Paul Salera	President/CEO psalera@westbaycap.org
Heather Braga	Chief Financial Officer hbraga@westbaycap.org
Sarah Lopatka-Faria	Chief Program Officer slopatka@westbaycap.org
Jenna Tietze	Chief Engagement & Communications Officer jtietze@westbaycap.org
Joslyn Groves	Director of Social Services jgroves@westbaycap.org
Kelly McHugh	Director of Senior and Family Services kmchugh@westbaycap.org
Melanie LaMountain	Director of Education & Workforce Development mlamountain@westbaycap.org
Jessica Alexander	Director of Childcare jalexander@westbaycap.org
Katherine Shappy	Director of Medical Respite kshappy@westbaycap.org

Helping people. Changing lives.

History of Service

Milestones



The 1960s were a turbulent time of change, and in 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson decided it was time to change how America fought poverty. President Johnson went to “war” with American poverty, determined to mold his country into the great society of his dreams.

The War on Poverty legislation created countless programs to assist American citizens and their families with everything from education to keeping food on the table. The War on Poverty also inspired many local organizations to help their community. One such organization, founded in 1966, was Warwick Community Action, which would become Westbay Community Action.

With nearly 60 years of service, Westbay’s commitment to helping the local community has only strengthened. Westbay remains eager to adapt to meet the changing needs of the community.

1960s

Founded as Warwick Community Action to fight poverty and support local families.

1970s

Opened Westbay Children’s Center, giving working parents safe, quality childcare.

1980s

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act of 1981 secured federal funding that strengthened Community Action nationwide and sustained Westbay’s programs locally.

1990s

Became Westbay Community Action, expanding services to meet the needs of all Kent County residents.

2000s

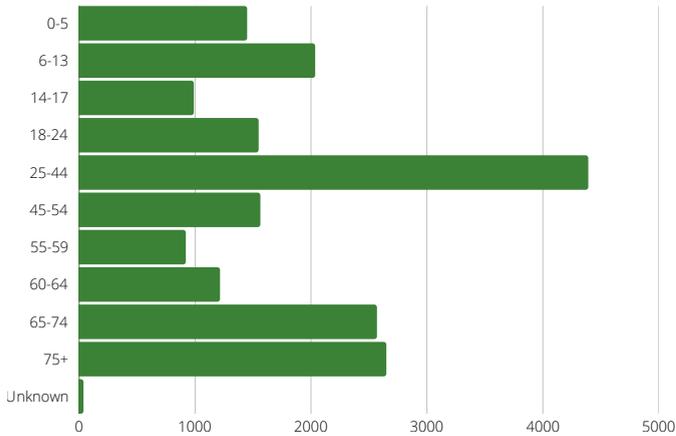
Opened the Marketplace food pantry and Westbay Farm to fight hunger, and helped families recover from the Great Flood of 2010.

2020s

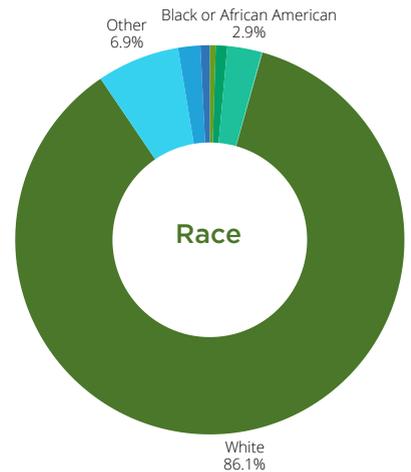
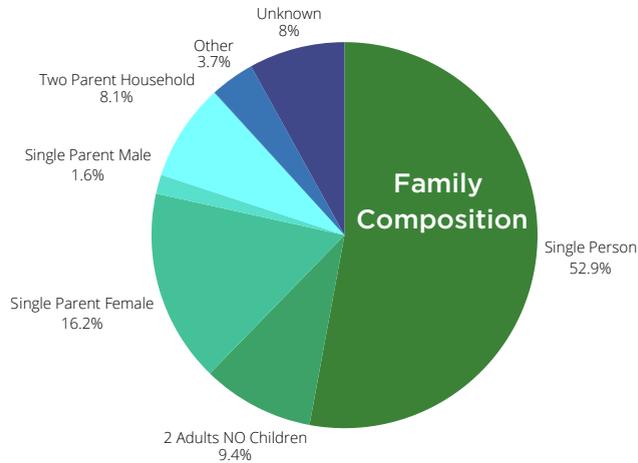
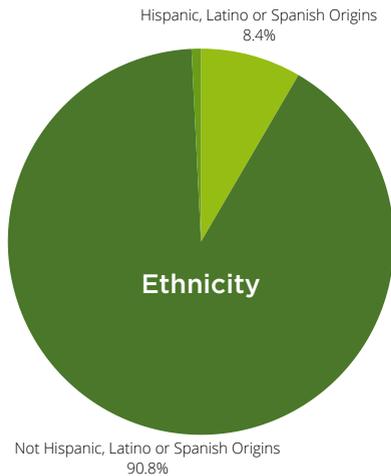
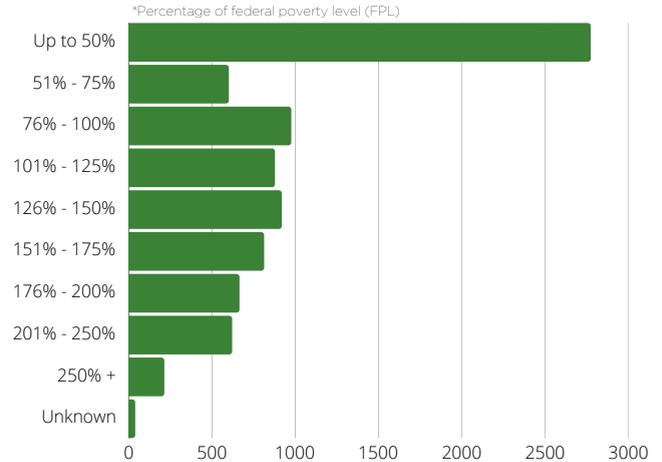
Expanded with innovative models, including LIHEAP expansion, medical respite, street medicine, and CFCM, to reach those most in need.

The People We Help

Age



Level of Household Income



Total Households Served: 8,500 - Total Persons Served: 19,372

Financials

Support & Revenue

Grants and Contracts - Federal	\$11,942,900
Grants and Contracts - Non-Federal	\$5,577,600
Program and other income	\$2,540,833
In-Kind food donations	\$1,704,891
Total:	\$21,766,224

Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	\$6,733,364
Professional Fees and Consulting	\$1,777,884
Program Supplies/Direct Assistance	\$8,905,176
Occupancy Costs	\$1,420,205
Other Operating Costs	\$1,195,507
Conferences and Trainings	\$74,919
In-Kind Food Expenses	\$1,662,002
Total:	\$21,769,057

2024-2025 Funding Sources

Federal - CSBG	\$376,589
Federal - Non-CSBG	\$11,566,311
State	\$1,537,786
Local	\$13,433
Private	\$4,026,381
Program and Other Income	\$2,540,833
In-Kind Food Donations	\$1,704,891
Total:	\$21,766,224



For every \$1 of federal CSBG funds, Westbay leveraged an additional \$56.80 to help improve people's lives.

Social Services

Westbay strengthens the community by meeting essential needs and providing supports that promote stability, safety, and dignity. From nourishing families and keeping homes warm to fostering connection and opportunity, these services offer a foundation on which individuals of all ages can thrive.

Joslyn Groves

Director of Social Services



- 2,276 people engaged in supportive services to build self-sufficiency and receive basic needs assistance
- 5,053 people received emergency or supplemental food
- 1,186 older adults participated in home delivered or congregate meal programs
- 379 households had their taxes completed, receiving over \$950,000 in returns.
- Over 20,000 pounds of produce were harvested at Westbay Farm
- 227 households had their homes weatherized
- 3,759 households avoided crisis with energy assistance
- 2,276 people engaged in supportive services to build self-sufficiency and receive basic needs assistance
- 259 households participated in our Adopt-a-Family program
- 668 households participated in our holiday programs

Social Services

“I am extremely pleased with the thorough and detailed home energy audit I recently received. The staff were professional, knowledgeable, and showed exceptional attention to detail—answering all of my questions along the way. I truly appreciate their timely assistance and the support provided through this great program.”

“I just want to say that I went to the food bank with a neighbor, and a young man took care of us. He told us he was a volunteer. He was very professional and pleasant. He helped us out and took very good care of us. He made a very stressful thing much more pleasant and less stressful. We hope he will be there the next time we go. Thank you for all you do for the community.”

“Thank you for the assistance you so professionally and kindly helped me receive. I am very happy to have my new refrigerator in time for the holidays, but mostly due to my medical conditions, I really needed safe food in the said fridge. My old one was good for six to seven years, but it completely froze up, and the food wasn't safe. I thank you for your prompt replies and understanding of the situation. I certainly hope this organization will be able to continue helping others as well as me. You are so needed by so many. Your job is helpful and much appreciated!”

“Thank you so much for your help! When I became disabled and couldn't work, I was very scared about my future. But then I found all of these wonderful resources in our state, including LIHEAP. I felt a lot better because I knew there were people here to help me.”

“I have been having my taxes prepared for over seven years here! Every time I come, all the volunteers are so friendly and so helpful. It's a blessing that I don't have to pay to have my taxes done anymore. I don't make a lot, and each year, I used to spend well over \$200. Since coming to Westbay, I have been able to save that money, which means I have more money in my account and more money to use on groceries and things I need to purchase. You people here are truly a lifesaver. I wish you all the best and keep doing what you're doing. I am sure you help so many people, and those people are probably just as grateful as I am today.”

Education & Workforce Development



Education and family support programs empower individuals to reach their goals and create a path toward stability. By building skills, strengthening confidence, and connecting people with the resources they need, these services open doors to greater opportunity and long-term success. We are a SNAP Education & Training Provider which includes the following cohorts: GED, Work Readiness and Job Search.

Melanie LaMountain

Director of Education & Workforce Development

- 207 individuals served
- 89 students with 12+ classroom hours
- 8 adults earned their GED
- 33 adults entered employment
- 92 adults participated in RI Works
- 8 adults completed Vocational Trainings

- Exceeded all RIDE outcome expectations
- Transitioned to digital records through the new LACES system
- A math support group was launched for math-only students. 4 earned their GEDs through this initiative
- A SNAP student was selected by The Change Agent, a national adult education publication, to have her article on disabilities published.

Stephen, a 2020 GED graduate from Westbay Adult Education Academy, has achieved remarkable success since his graduation. After relocating to Oklahoma, he was promptly accepted into the police academy and is now employed as a police officer.

During a visit back to Rhode Island, Stephen generously shared his journey with our current GED students. His story served as a profound inspiration, motivating and encouraging them to persevere in their own educational pursuits.



Medical Respite & Street Medicine Outreach

Health and housing supports provide compassionate care for Rhode Islanders experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Through medical respite and community outreach, these services offer healing, dignity, and connection while linking individuals to the resources they need for recovery and stability.



Katie Shappy

Director of Medical Respite

- 🌿 43 individuals served
- 🌿 11 individuals (25%) have been discharged to permanent placements, including housing, nursing homes, or assisted living facilities.
- 🌿 19 clients currently in care and awaiting placement.
- 🌿 Over 267 Street Medicine visits
- 🌿 116 visits showed measurable improvement in clients' overall condition
- 🌿 Active collaboration with 11 community organizations to enhance service delivery

*Data reflects activity from January–October 2025

One of Westbay's long-term clients entered Medical Respite after years of living in a tent and working odd jobs as a mechanic. He faced multiple health challenges, including a reinjured thumb, knee pain, and dental issues, along with struggles related to substance use.

While in respite, he received case management from Westbay staff and medical care from other partners. In a safe environment, he successfully underwent thumb surgery, was fitted with new dentures, and began Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT). Staff also supported him in reconnecting with his mother in Florida.

In nearly a year, he completed his treatment plan and was discharged to his mother's home. Since then, he has found work, begun saving for his own apartment, and is moving forward with renewed health and stability.

Family & Senior Services



Case management and family support programs connect people with the resources and guidance they need to navigate life's challenges. From assisting older adults and individuals with disabilities to strengthening families and supporting new mothers and young children through WIC, these services provide care, stability, and opportunity for healthier, more secure futures.

Kelly McHugh

Director of Senior & Family Services

-  2,981 people received case management services
-  400 individuals are receiving Conflict Free Case Management
-  Over 1,600 women and children are receiving nutritional counseling

-  581 people were served through the Adult Protective Services program
-  273 people received case management through the At-Home Cost Share Program

"I've struggled for a long time with my balance. I can't stand in one place without falling backwards, and I've had several bad falls that left me with serious head injuries. For the most part, I stayed home and no longer drive because I just couldn't get around safely. Even going to the corner store could take nearly two hours, because I had to stop and lean against walls to steady myself along the way.

Through Westbay, I've been receiving monthly food deliveries to my senior apartment, and I've also had the support of a case manager. After only a couple of conversations, I was given the biggest surprise: an electric scooter. And not just any scooter — it's red, my favorite color.

Now, for the first time in years, I have freedom again. I can get to the store without fear of falling or worrying how long it will take me. The fear of falling is one of the worst things to live with, and having this scooter has taken away so much of that worry. It's given me safety, independence, and a new sense of peace. I won't be racing it any time soon, but it has truly changed my life."

Westbay Children's Center

Westbay's Children's Center offers high-quality early education for children from six weeks old through age five, providing a safe and nurturing environment where every child can learn and grow.

Guided by the RI Early Learning and Development Standards, classrooms blend teacher- and child-directed activities that support progress across all areas of development.

The Center participates in the state's BrightStars Quality Improvement and Rating System and partners with programs such as EOHHS Kids Connect, Warwick Public Schools, and CACFP to ensure each child receives individualized, developmentally and culturally appropriate care.

Together, these efforts prepare young learners for kindergarten and beyond while supporting healthy families and strong futures.



Jessica Alexander

Director Westbay Children's Center



"My 5-year-old has been at Westbay Children's Center for three years and has moved through three classrooms. The teachers are always so patient and supportive, and I've never once felt the need to look anywhere else. Knowing my child is safe and happy gives me peace of mind while I'm at work, and I love getting updates from the staff throughout the day.

Westbay has also supported my family through the Marketplace food pantry and the Adopt-A-Family program, and I'm looking forward to learning more about WIC. I'm expecting another child and already plan to enroll here again, continuing a tradition that started when I went to Kindergarten at the Children's Center 25 years ago."



Samantha's Story:

The Westbay difference

Samantha has been in and out of GED programs for years, but when she joined Westbay's Adult Education Program in 2022, she knew this time would be different. As a mother of four children, ages 13, 8, 2, and 11 months, her journey has not been easy. Balancing schoolwork with parenting often felt impossible, but the support she found here has given her hope.

She credits her teachers for making all the difference. "These teachers are different from the others I've had," Samantha shared. "They are excellent teachers. They are great with people who are overwhelmed, and they always keep things light and happy. They help me calm down and focus, while keeping me on track and never putting students down."

With their encouragement, Samantha has reached milestones she never thought possible. She recently passed her very first English pre-test and was even published in 2023, an achievement that fuels her lifelong dream of becoming a writer. She hopes to share her life experiences through novels, editorials, and creative writing, offering comfort and inspiration to others facing difficult circumstances. "Words are always there, even when we're gone," she said. "If my words can help someone through a tough time, I'll be happy."

Today, Samantha continues to work toward her GED with a renewed sense of confidence and a vision for the future. Her story is one of perseverance, hope, and the power of supportive community.



Michael's Story:

Finding support in a time of need

Michael never imagined he would have to ask for help. "It took eating a lot of pride for me to reach out," he admitted. "But if I didn't, I'd be in a bigger bind, and any bigger, I might not be getting out of it."

When life became overwhelming, he turned to Westbay. After meeting with a Westbay Case Manager for just 45 minutes, Michael regained hope. "He offered tremendous help and got me going again," he said. Michael was then referred to another worker, who helped secure rental assistance and connected him with additional resources to move forward with long-term support.

At the same time, Michael and his soon-to-be wife were facing additional challenges at home. She had to leave her job to care for their adopted daughter, who is nonverbal and autistic. Navigating services for her care while trying to make ends meet had left the family struggling.

With the help of Westbay and programs like rental assistance, WIC and the food pantry, Michael says he's finally "getting out of a hole." He credits not only the staff but also the volunteers who made him feel respected and supported. "The food bank staff are so helpful. Even the volunteers! I've only used it twice, and I won't abuse it. If I don't need it, I won't go. I'll let others who need it use it."

Reflecting on his journey, Michael couldn't be more grateful. "If I had to say one bad thing about Westbay: Nothing. Not one thing. Westbay has been tremendously helpful to us." Today, he feels he and his family are finally moving forward with dignity, stability, and renewed hope.



Whether you need a hand... or have one to lend,
we're here.

How to Find Us

Program Services

487 Jefferson Blvd.
Warwick, RI 02886
401.732.4660

Westbay Children's Center

22 Astral Street
Warwick, RI 02888
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Administration Office

224 Buttonwoods Ave.
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Westbay Farm

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West Warwick LIHEAP Office

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WIC

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