



## New York State Community Action Association

2 Charles Boulevard, Guilderland, New York 12084

518-690-0491 (p) 518-690-0498 (f)

[www.nyscaaonline.org](http://www.nyscaaonline.org)

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For: New York State Community Action Association, 2 Charles Blvd, Guilderland, NY

Contact: Sean Wyse, Communications Specialist (518) 690-0491 ext. 28 or [swyse@nyscaaonline.org](mailto:swyse@nyscaaonline.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Where Employment Ends, Community Action Begins**

Albany, NY March 3, 2010 – Late last night, President Barak Obama signed a bill reinstating unemployment benefits for thousands of Americans. The bill extends benefits for the unemployed for one month, and includes subsidies to help the unemployed buy health insurance.

“During these difficult economic times, supporting American workers, their families and our small businesses must be everyone’s focus,” said President Obama before signing the bill to extend unemployment benefits.

Without this extension, the U.S. Department of Labor projected 1.5 million Americans were to lose their unemployment benefits this month, including 54,300 New Yorkers.

Even with the extension of unemployment benefits, additional help is available for all New Yorkers across our state struggling with unemployment. New York State was awarded \$86.7 million in Community Services Block Grant funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) with funds distributed among all 52 Community Action agencies across the state. ARRA funds are helping low-income New Yorkers receive on-the-job training, especially in the green building industry, while providing the resources needed to secure full-time employment, keeping New Yorkers out of poverty.

“Community Action helps give New Yorkers the tools to help make ends meet when they are faced with unemployment,” said Denise Harlow, CEO of the New York State Community Action Association. “Due to the mounting pressure of our nation’s economic downturn, ARRA has kept thousands of individuals and families from falling into poverty by providing a variety of resources and continues to assist New York’s most vulnerable families.”

Here in the Capital Region, there are Community Action Agencies located in each county. All of these local Community Action Agencies are committed to empowering local residents through the promotion of self-sufficiency, with services ranging from job skills training to financial counseling, nutrition outreach to healthcare support.

With ARRA funding, the Albany Community Action Partnership, located on Sheridan Avenue, has assisted 40 individuals in pre-employment training workshops since November, with 5 individuals finding job placement and more to follow. The Commission on Economic Opportunity for the Capital District Region, located on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Troy, is utilizing ARRA to expand Head Start and Early Head Start. With the creation of approximately 20 jobs along with the necessary job training, Capital Region residents will have the opportunity to not only gain a job, but discover a lifetime career path.

Similarly, Saratoga County EOC, Inc. and the Schenectady Community Action Program are utilizing ARRA to assist not only the recently unemployed, but all residents who are in need.

“In addition to providing much needed work today, ARRA has had a significant impact on Community Action Agencies that have been helping New Yorkers already living in poverty prior to our current economic downturn,” said Amy Turner, Board President of the New York State Community Action Association. “Families living in poverty are finding more programs that offer food assistance, transportation services and counseling services.”

With many New Yorkers experiencing cuts in salary, loss of work and now living with unemployment benefits for additional month, Community Action programs and services couldn’t be needed more.

*More information is available from Sean Wyse, Communications Specialist at (518) 690-0491 ext. 28 or email [swyse@nyscaaonline.org](mailto:swyse@nyscaaonline.org). Visit us online at [www.nyscaaonline.org](http://www.nyscaaonline.org). The New York State Community Action Association is the statewide membership organization serving the needs of the State’s 52 Community Action Agencies.*

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