

2017-2018 Community Crisis Network (CCN) Report

CCN Statement of Purpose

CCN is a community partnership started in 1998 in response to concerns by area congregations of a dramatic increase in people seeking assistance and a desire to improve assessment and response. CCN has since emerged as a best practice model for people to obtain the support they need. Partners are Schenectady Community Action Program (SCAP), Catholic Charities of Schenectady, Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM), City Mission of Schenectady and area congregations including Congregation Gates of Heaven representing the Jewish community.

CCN Locations

When CCN began in 1998 we had one location. Today Community Resource Navigators are located at nine (9) locations.

Schenectady County Public Library, Central Branch 99 Clinton Street, Schenectady, 12305	Pleasant Valley Elementary School 1097 Forest Road, Schenectady, NY 12303
SCAP's Community Resource Center 913 Albany Street, Schenectady 12307	Mont Pleasant Middle School 1121 Forest Rd, Schenectady, 12303
Schenectady County Community College 78 Washington Avenue, Schenectady, 12305	Lincoln Elementary School 2 S Robinson St, Schenectady, 12304
Ellis Health Center 600 McClellan St, Schenectady, 12304	Keane Elementary School 1252 Albany Street, Schenectady, NY 12304
Schenectady City Court 105 Jay Street, Schenectady 12305	

What does CCN Do?

An array of services are provided to individuals and families to assist them to meet their basic needs, ameliorate crises and connect them with long term services when needed. Referrals are made to partners in order to build resources to move from crisis to self-sufficiency. Services of partners are comprehensive. Please see the websites, listed on the last page, for more information. Available onsite to all CCN customers @ 913 Albany Street (SCAP's Community Resource Center) are Legal Aid Society of NENY, National Grid, Health Insurance Enrollers, and Weatherization.

Basic needs include food, clothing, housing, utilities, medical care, employment supports, and transportation but are not limited to these. The approach is to maximize resources available while reducing duplication of services, eliminating the frustrating search for assistance people in crisis often endure.

Food Insecurity: Many people seeking assistance are food insecure and do not have access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. To meet immediate needs, food pantries are utilized. In 2017 **123** food pantry referrals were made. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as Food Stamps) are used to meet longer-term needs. In 2017, **844** initial and recertification SNAP applications were completed. *₁

Lack of adequate clothing affects families' quality of life and opportunities. In 2017, CCN provided **219** coat vouchers and **776** households with clothing vouchers.

Access to **Health Insurance** helps people obtain preventive care and treat chronic conditions, which improves their overall quality of life. In 2017, CCN made **161** referrals to insurance enrollers who maintain a presence at SCAP, Ellis Health Centers and Hometown Health Center.

Utilities help make homes safe, habitable, and functional, especially during cold winter months. Gas and electricity enable the storage and preparation of food. CCN processed **262** HEAP applications and made **623** referrals to National Grid's Consumer Advocate in 2017. The Advocate worked with these customers to complete individualized payment agreements. An additional **122** households received National Grid advocacy.

Lack of **transportation** affects people's ability to maintain jobs and access services. While the CCN accesses alternative means of transportation, such as MAS transportation (medical transportation for Medicaid enrollees) or the Ellis Shuttle, the program also distributed **1,136** bus tokens in 2017, assisting people to obtain and maintain employment, access services and address emergency medical needs.

Additional services in 2017: We use an integrated services model in CCN. That means that services available at SCAP are available to all CCN customers. We also use referral to partners and services available by partners can be seen on their websites. Here is a sampling of services available.

84 referrals to **Legal Aid** for assistance in areas such as housing, public benefits and immigration

Assistance with submission of **32 Fair Hearing requests**

Assistance in obtaining **unemployment benefits** for **100** individuals.

There is not enough **Safe and Affordable Housing** in Schenectady, with many tenants paying more than 30% of their household income on rent. Quality, safe, affordable housing is not accessible for many in Schenectady County. By accessing CCN, individuals and families have access to crucial supports to enable them to obtain and maintain housing. Examples of these supports include:

81 households received security payments of which 19 of these families were helped by a grant from Schenectady Inner City Ministry providing up to \$500 in security deposits.

126 households received landlord/tenant mediation services

116 households received tenant rights and responsibilities education and code assistance referrals

Through onsite presence at **Eviction Court** in Schenectady, **251** households facing immediate eviction received assistance with **204** evictions prevented, enabling the tenants to remain permanently housed.

Support services were provided to **251** families in emergency shelter/hotels, of those **205** families were permanently housed. Of the 205 permanently housed, 57 were referred and accepted into Transitional Housing Programs and 49 were referred and accepted into supportive permanent housing programs (more information below).

Transitional supportive housing for homeless, pregnant women and/or women with children. In 2017, **53** families (53 woman and 82 children) resided at Sojourn House. Of these 53 families, 46 moved into permanent housing. At the 3-month follow-up point, all 46 families remained permanently housed.

Rapid Rehousing connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. In 2017, **124** (51 individuals and 73 families) households received a rental subsidy.

Supportive Housing Solutions serves households with a history of substance abuse that are chronically homeless or include a homeless veteran. Since 2016, **91** participants have been housed with **63** maintaining their housing.

Permanent Housing combines rental subsidies with support services for families who become homeless due to a disability such as mental illness, chemical dependency, HIV/AIDs, or other physical disability. In 2017, **30** families received subsidies with 39 adults and 59 children.

Shelter Plus Care (S+C) assistance for homeless and chronically homeless individuals and families in which the primary participant has a diagnosed disability of severe mental illness, chronic substance abuse or HIV/AIDS. S+C provides rental assistance in connection with matching supportive services. In 2017, **63** households, consisting of 45 individuals and 18 families that included 28 children, received services.

In addition to the above, CCN has been working to increase available, safe, affordable housing for individuals and families where at least one adult in the household has a serious and persistent mental illness. Participants receive a rental subsidy and support services. In 2017 25 households received these services. In addition, another 13 homeless households (9 Veterans) received permanent housing vouchers through another affordable housing initiative that includes intensive support services

A Word on Disaster Assistance

Since 2011 when Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee devastated sections of Rotterdam Junction, Scotia and the Stockade Neighborhood in Schenectady the CCN has actively supported the area in responding to disasters. In 2016, CCN took an active part in providing long term support to the victims of the Jay Street fire that killed four residents. In 2018 CCN stepped in to assist several victims of the Mudslide on Nott Terrace. CCN will continue to work with Schenectady County Disaster Preparedness and area VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disasters).

A Unique Feature of CCN – An Emergency Fund

Since inception, congregations supporting CCN have contributed to an emergency fund. The emergency fund is used 100% for direct benefits to individuals and families when no other resource exists. This is a unique feature of the CCN, Navigators know the community's available resources and access those first, relying on the fund only when necessary. The fund is flexible as are eligibility requirements.

Emergency Fund *₂ donations for 2017 were \$8,165. Donations were used for;

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|----------------------|------------------|---|
| ▪ Birth Certificates | * Identification | * Housing (Sheriff fees/rental payment) |
| ▪ Hotel | * Prescriptions | * Background Check for Employment |
| ▪ Bus Passes | * Utilities | |

Schedule a presentation!

The staff of CCN are eager to share information with you. Please contact Naomi Wood to schedule a presentation at SCAP @ 518-374-9181 or nwood@scapny.org. *₃

Partner Services



Schenectady Community Action Program

<http://www.scapny.org>



Catholic Charities of Schenectady

<https://www.ccseniorservices.org/>



Schenectady Inner City Ministry

<http://www.sicm.us/>



City Mission of Schenectady

<http://citymission.com/>

- *1 SICM is the area's largest and most comprehensive food pantry
- *2 the emergency fund has been administered since inception by Catholic Charities of Schenectady. No program or administrative costs are deducted from the donations. 100% are used to assist those in need.
- *3 Staff are employed, trained and supervised by SCAP