



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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ALBANY, NY 12231-0001

ANDREW M. CUOMO
GOVERNOR

CESAR A. PERALES
SECRETARY OF STATE

May 1, 2014

Dear Friends:

On behalf of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, congratulations to the New York State Community Action Network as you celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Community Action in our nation.

Since 1964, the Community Action Network has worked diligently to improve the lives of our State's most vulnerable residents. From the time President Johnson declared war on poverty, local Community Action Agencies, working with low-income residents and families, have played a major role in structuring programs and services designed to combat poverty and generate upward economic mobility in their communities. By implementing the concept of "maximum feasible participation," Community Action Agency boards have spurred many to participate in community development -- producing a multitude of inspirational achievements. In 2013 alone, through the work of our Community Action Network, volunteers throughout the State donated more than one million hours to work in their communities; an effort that, in the aggregate, successfully addressed conditions of poverty and broke down barriers to economic security in over 640,000 distinct cases.

During these fiscally challenging times, the Community Action Network demonstrates the best of our civic commitment to our fellow New Yorkers. In 2013, for every one dollar in Community Services Block Grant funds received, New York's Network leveraged more than eight dollars from State, local and private sources, including the value of volunteer hours. This is an impressive figure demonstrating the dedication of our Community Action Network to forging partnerships, engaging their communities, and generating the greatest return on investment possible for the residents of New York.

As we commemorate Community Action Month, my vision for enhancing and targeting community services in New York State continues to focus on workforce development and on integrating New Americans. In 2013, through the efforts of the Community Action Agencies, 34,000 unemployed individuals found jobs. And, another more than 34,000 New Americans were served by the New York State Office for New Americans in its first year of operations.

The War on Poverty represented a profound and far-reaching shift in national social policy, demonstrating a vigorous commitment to empowering low-income individuals and neighborhoods to develop the resources and skills needed for thriving communities and individual opportunity. The War on Poverty was also a grand recognition of the great value and potential of every American, regardless of his or her present economic circumstances. It affirmed in principle that we, as a Nation, could not, should not and would not tolerate the loss of any present or future generation to the symptoms of poverty, and that we must persistently endeavor to ensure pathways to prosperity are available to all.

Each generation and every era is challenged with the critical and complex question of poverty. It is our generations' obligation to meet this challenge with intelligence, creativity, persistence and -- above all -- humanity. During these difficult economic times, it is important that we passionately maintain our commitment to fighting poverty and strengthening our State's civic and economic life. I commend you for your work thus far, and urge you to renew your efforts to meet the many challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cesar A. Perales
Secretary of State