Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee

Annual Report 2023
Dear Friends,

Partnership has always been the cornerstone of CEOC’s success, and the 2022-2023 fiscal year demonstrated that core strength better than perhaps any other period in our 58-year history.

With trusted partners the City of Cambridge and the Cambridge Community Foundation (CCF), we launched one of the boldest anti-poverty initiatives in the country, the Rise Up Cambridge guaranteed-income program. Also in collaboration with CCF, the Greater Boston Food Bank, and ICNA Relief New England, our fight against food insecurity grew broader and more inclusive than ever. And with the resources of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA Foundation behind us, we expanded our services to include a comprehensive mental health intervention.

Throughout this report, you will see the names of the many funding partners, donors, and community supporters who are the lifeblood of this organization. Thanks to all of you and the power of our partnerships, CEOC has not only been effective this year, but also proactive and innovative, in our mission to ensure affordable housing, access to health care and education, food security, and economic stability for thousands of Cambridge residents.

Tina M. Alu
Executive Director

Moana Bentin
Board President

FY23 Board of Directors

Hector Acevedo
Randy Albelda, Treasurer
Sally Benbasset
Moana Bentin, President
Victoria Bergland
Debbie Bonilla
Gail Council
Maria Fontellio, Clerk
Linda Montgomery
Elaine O’Reilly
Toni Preston, Vice President

FY23 Staff List

Tina Alu, Executive Director
Rachel Plummer, Associate Director
Duvieanne Smith, Director of Administration
Joseph Almeida, Director of Operations
Natalie Ribeiro, Director of Housing and Hoarding Intervention Services
Jaquelina Dabo, Project Director, Cambridge RISE
Tabithaee Howard, Community Advocate and Educator
Henry Nelson, Project Specialist
Yohannes Adeadigo, Food Pantry Manager
Jenny Andre-Jean, Community Advocate and Educator
Sofia Berhe, Community Advocate and Financial Coach
Janet Doucette, Receptionist
Shannon Fegan, Hoarding Intervention Specialist and Professional Organizer
Mitchell Goldstein, VITA Tax Preparer
Gustavo Gallego, VITA Tax Preparer
Yemi Kibret, Program and Advocacy Coordinator
Ada Navarro, Pantry Advocate
Krista Spaulding, Case Management and Hoarding Intervention Specialist
La’Shell Thompson, Community Advocate and Educator
Yanick Denis, Housing Specialist and Case Manager
Anna Minaya, Participant Liaison
Marie Altime, Participant Liaison
2023 COMMUNITY IMPACT
We are committed to fulfilling our vision of an inclusive and diverse Cambridge without poverty where everyone has affordable housing, quality healthcare and education, food security, and economic stability.

Between our **two food pantry sites**, CEOC distributed food and grocery store gift cards to more than **8,600 households**.

We have given away over **$175,000 in direct, small cash grants** to our community since the 2022 launch of our Cash Direct Small Grant Program, which provides **$250 to Cambridge residents in need**.

CEOC provided **individual financial coaching to 136 participants**, assisting them with budgeting, debt resolution, credit card management, and bank services.

CEOC provided **free tax preparation** to **1,526 low-income tax filers** and assisted filers in obtaining over $2.6 million dollars in federal and state refunds.

By providing **947 Cambridge tenants** housing case management, advocacy services, and emergency funds to cover rent arrearages and other housing costs, CEOC helped ensure **312 residents** were able to maintain stable housing and avoid eviction.

CEOC provided **FAFSA application enrollment, advocacy, and education to 97 individuals** to ensure access to financial aid and savings to afford college.

As a certified Massachusetts Health Connector Navigator agency, we delivered **health insurance outreach** and education to **5,416 individuals**.

CEOC provided **SNAP outreach, education, and enrollment assistance to 717 individuals** to increase access to nutritious food.
Rise Up Cambridge Cash Assistance Program
In partnership with the Mayor’s office and the Cambridge Community Foundation, CEOC launched the Rise Up Cambridge program in June. This groundbreaking initiative provides direct cash assistance as a means to reduce poverty and empower low-income families with at least one child. CEOC conducted outreach in seven languages and reviewed more than 3,200 applications in June and July. For the more than 1,900 applicants who were approved, $500 monthly payments began in August and are continuing through December 2024.

Rise Up was the country’s first citywide non-lottery cash assistance initiative of its kind, aiming to promote economic mobility, address the racial wealth gap, and support families’ basic needs while preserving the city’s diversity. Many applicants learned about and expressed interest in other CEOC services through the process as well.

Food Pantry Improvements
CEOC installed a new walk-in refrigerator and freezer this September, thanks to a Community Investment Grant from the Greater Boston Food Bank. With increased cold storage capacity, we are now able to offer food pantry patrons a greater variety of fresh produce, meat, fish, and dairy products.

We also added halal meat vouchers for Muslim families through a new partnership with ICNA Relief New England. The $25 vouchers can be redeemed at Al bara Market, a trusted and reputable local halal meat provider in Cambridge. This collaboration with a local business supports the growth and development of our community’s economy while respecting the diverse backgrounds and religious beliefs of those we serve.

In addition, a $25,000 grant from the Cambridge Community Foundation in April ensured our food pantries were stocked with a wide variety of herbs, spices, nuts, fruits, vegetables, and culturally relevant items that are typically difficult to find at food pantries. The grant also allowed us to provide pantry patrons with grocery store gift cards to supplement the pantries’ offerings.
Health & Stability Advancements
This year, CEOC received one of five Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA Foundation "Advancing Community Driven Mental Health" three-year grants, enabling us to implement a community-based mental health intervention at a time when mental health challenges are at an all time high in our community. CEOC is among the first agencies in the country to use the Problem Management Plus (PM+) intervention model developed by the World Health Organization.

CEOC staff were trained to deliver the five-session intervention with community members, and the program began enrolling participants in October 2023. Thanks to the diversity of our staff, we’re able to deliver this intervention in three languages.

Other health developments this year included adding another hoarding specialist to our team and the certification of Joseph Almeida, CEOC’s Director of Operations, as a state SHINE Counselor (in addition to being a Health Connector Navigator). The SHINE certification means that Medicare recipients and uninsured senior residents can meet with Joseph for free to learn about healthcare benefits and options.

CEOC also continued to foster long-term partnerships with two other established nonprofit organizations, De Novo and Transition House, to provide wraparound services and targeted training to improve housing stability, financial security, and overall well-being for families living in Cambridge.

Summer Outreach
Weekends and evenings in June, July, and August brought the CEOC team outdoors and into the community. Staff and board members offered program information, answered questions, and promoted Rise Up Cambridge at the Cambridge Housing Authority Summer Block Party, Massachusetts Health Connector Events, National Night Out, the Cambridge Jazz Festival, and many more events.

Awards
CEOC was honored for our partnership and positive impact in the community by three Cambridge organizations this year: Transition House, the Cambridge Human Services Commission, and De Novo Center for Justice and Healing. The Dr. Joseph H. Brenner Award from De Novo, named after the company founder, went to CEOC Executive Director Tina Alu for “embodying Brenner’s spirit of volunteerism and, by example, inspiring others to engage in volunteer service.”
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
(10/1/22 – 9/30/23)

Your generous contributions allow us to continue our fight against poverty’s causes and impacts in the Cambridge community.

CHAMPIONS
Anonymous
Debbie Klein
Douglas Marshall
Ellen Semonoff
Felicia Aronson
Geoff Beane
Lisa Dobberteen
Thomas Lehrer

SUPPORTERS
Alfred Fantini
Altaf Mulla
Anhar Mulla
Ann Lambert
Anne Cardoso
Antoinette Preston
Arthur MacEwan
Barbara Taggart
Charles Joseph Daval
Christopher Chan
Christopher Wright
Deborah Clemence
Deliris Colon
Edmund Lee
Elaine DeRosa
Elaine O'Reilly
Elizabeth Coleman
Ellen Friedman
Ellen Leopold
Emelie Born
Estelle Disch
Esther Hanig
Gail Willett
Gustavo Gallego
Hannah Larsen
Janet Solomon
Jeanne Gillis
Jeffrey Walker
Jessica Daniels
Jim Campen
John Casey
Joseph Frusciante
Justina Yang
Kenneth Weill
Kevin Murphy
Kevin Plummer
Laura Booth
Lawrence Borins
Lawrence Klein
Liana Laughlin
Lisa Peterson
Lori Lander
Lou Fuoco
Margaret Gelin
Margery Davies
Maria Fontellio
Martha Osler
Mary Penniston
Maxwell Solet
Melissa Immel
Michael Scarlett
Mira Bernstein
Moana Bentin
Nadine Marlowe
Nancy Raphael
Nancy Tauber
Neil Rohr
Pardis Saffari
Patricia Arruda
Patricia Murphy
Peter Sessa
Phil Johnson
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Randy Albelda
Rasha El-Jaroudi
Rebecca Hayden
Richard Bucci
Rick Melvoin
Robert Binstock
Robert Smith
Rolf Goetze
Ruth Bourquin
Sally Benbasset
Sarah Dinklage
Sarah Scott
Siobhan Bredin
Steve Morrill
Susan Davies
The Toomey Committee
Timothy Toomey Jr.
Tina Alu
Valerie Tobia
William Grant Esq.
Yousra Neberai

CEOC would like to thank the following organizations for their funding and partnership:

City of Cambridge

Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program

Massachusetts Economic Development and Industrial Corporations
Fiscal Year 2023 Financials  
(10/1/22 – 9/30/23)

GROSS REVENUE

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>Government Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation &amp; Corporations</td>
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<td>Individuals</td>
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<td>In-Kind Contributions</td>
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<td>Other (Earned, Interest)</td>
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EXPENSES

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<td>General &amp; Administrative</td>
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<td>Fundraising &amp; Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,370,592</strong></td>
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Note: Figures are unaudited.
Your Support Changes Lives!

What does CEOC mean to our community? That more than 8,000 Cambridge households per year receive fresh produce, dairy products, meat, pantry staples, and other necessities; approximately 1,000 families are protected from unstable housing; and nearly 2,000 families are receiving critical cash assistance. As an independent nonprofit, CEOC has counted on the community to help us fight poverty in our city since 1965. Please help us ensure all Cambridge residents have the opportunity to succeed by making a donation today.

Click here to give today!

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