

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



THE
CONNECTICUT
PROJECT

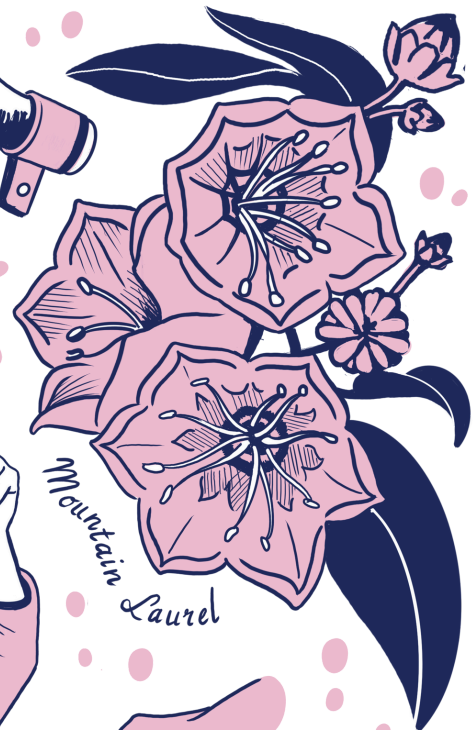


THE
CONNECTICUT
PROJECT
ACTION FUND

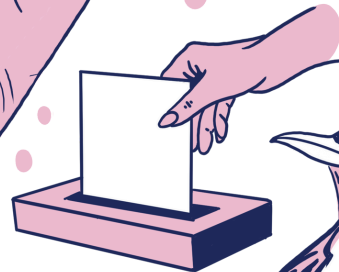
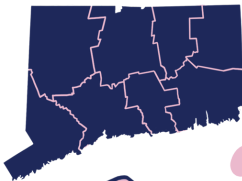




People Power



Mountain Laurel



Charter Oak Tree



North American Robin

CREATING
CHANGE
TOGETHER

“We're called The Connecticut Project.”

I'm a part of that Project. Now, what is the Project? It's about listening to people in the working and middle class, hearing their concerns about their communities, and motivating them to take action. In my capacity as a leader with The Connecticut Project, I listen to people and the challenges they face. I listen and validate it directly in the context of a conversation at their door, on the street, or over the phone. As part of The Connecticut Project, I see it as necessary for us to act as the voice of the people, and for that voice to be heard. We talk to the people. We are for the people, wherever they are and however they are. It is on us to listen to and amplify the voices of the people. We are The Connecticut Project.”

Yandris

New Britain

As we look back on our first three years, we're energized and inspired by the early work that The Connecticut Project has done and the thousands of Connecticut residents who have joined our project. We also feel the urgency and primacy of our task, as an affordability crisis hurts people across the state, the federal government cuts important benefits and divides Connecticut communities, and the American dream gets more and more out of reach for working class people in Connecticut. But together, Yandris and the thousands of others who have taken action with The Connecticut Project are doing what working people have always done: building a better world, brick by brick. That's our shared project, and we're just getting started.

Garth Harries

President and CEO

Stephen Mandel

The Connecticut Project
Board Chair

Kica Matos

The Connecticut Project Action Fund
Board Chair

PUTTING MONEY BACK IN PEOPLE'S POCKETS: EITC

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is one of the largest anti-poverty programs in the United States – and too often, it's one of our country's best-kept secrets. In 2024, almost 45,000 eligible Connecticut residents didn't claim the federal EITC. In 2025, The Connecticut Project, allied partners, and leaders set out to close that gap. We knocked on doors, made phone calls, and partnered with other organizations to educate people about the federal EITC. We advertised on buses and billboards, in grocery stores and small businesses, and online. We teamed up with local leaders and elected officials in Hartford, Waterbury, Willimantic, Stamford, and Manchester to get the word out. And we collaborated with groups like SimplifyCT, AARP of Connecticut, The Diaper Bank of Connecticut, and more.

In the end, thousands of families put money back in their pockets by claiming what they'd earned, and we'll be pushing for even more people to get what they are owed in 2026. Looking ahead, The Connecticut Project is committed to empowering working class people to claim the benefits they're owed, and to making sure our state treats them with respect and good service in the process.

- ✓ **More than 3,700 people filed, claiming around \$8.6 million**
- ✓ **80% of filers had not heard of the EITC before**
- ✓ **More than 3 million ad impressions**
- ✓ **13,000 calls made, connecting with more than 18,000 people**



More than a hundred people shared their stories with us after filing for their earned income tax credits. This is some of what they had to say:



“I truly appreciate this service as it saves me money. **I work for a school and my salary is humble. Therefore, I appreciate any opportunity to save in my expenses.** Thank you for helping me.”

-C., Bridgeport

“**I’m a single mom that went through domestic violence.** I’ll [use the EITC to] pay back bills and get my daughter prepared for [school].” -A.

“I have a five month old son and a five year old son, and the EITC helped me get things for my kids that they would need for the year to come: **new crib, stroller, diapers, and pay for swimming lessons for my five year old.**” -E., East Windsor

“**[I’ll use the EITC for] paying bills and staying above water.** It will help keep stress levels low.”

-N., Waterbury

TRANSFORMING CHILD CARE

Without quality, affordable child care, our world simply doesn't work. It's vital for families, children, and our economy - and it's been a priority for The Connecticut Project from the start.



We entered 2025 with a clear mandate from parents: fix Connecticut's child care crisis. In partnership with the Child Care for Connecticut, CT Early Childhood Alliance, All Our Kin, and many others, we set out to push lawmakers to bring down costs and increase access to quality care. Our leaders and coalition partners fought hard to secure Connecticut's transformational first step: an expansion of affordable child care for families through **a lasting endowment**. In the coming years, the trust fund will ensure **free and affordable child care from birth to kindergarten** for working class families.

Connecticut's promise of free and affordable child care will take time to get off the ground. In the meantime, we are finding ways to create more child care in communities and we will continue to listen to what parents need. In May 2025, we celebrated the graduation of the first class of educators through the Waterbury child care incubator program - projects through which would-be educators, who are disproportionately women of color, get training and support to create new child care options for families. Waterbury's is one of four active incubators throughout the state, projects made possible because of investments by The Connecticut Project and advocacy from The Connecticut Project Action Fund in 2024. In 2024, The Connecticut Project also brought the RAPID survey to our state, partnering with Stanford University to talk to thousands of parents of young children about their lives and needs, and bring their perspectives to speak truth to power.

RAPID surveyed 1,803 parents of children under the age of 6 across all eight Connecticut counties.

Among parents surveyed:

- **Affordability** is the number one reason families without child care aren't accessing it
- Almost **two in three** (63%) report spending more than 7% of their income on child care (anything higher than 7% is considered “unaffordable” by experts)
- There are **significant barriers** to using Care4Kids subsidies to help pay for child care;
- **More than two in three** (69%) parents of a young child with a disability report difficulty finding a child care provider who can meet their child's needs.

MAKING QUALITY HOUSING AFFORDABLE

Housing is one of the biggest expenses and stressors in most people's lives. Rent and mortgages are costly. Demand is high, and supply is low. Stability can be hard to come by.

The Connecticut Project has invested in partners and projects that will create more than 800 future affordable housing units. And at the Capitol in 2025, The Connecticut Project Action Fund advocated for bills to protect renters' rights and keep costs down.

In April, dozens of residents from our community chapters headed to the Capitol for The Connecticut Project Action Fund's lobby day to tell their legislators to support these bills.

While they didn't pass into law, **the movement of people speaking out for affordable housing grew, with more than 5,000** Connecticut Project supporters taking action on housing this year.

It should be possible for hardworking people to have affordable, quality housing without breaking their budgets. We're fighting for a Connecticut where that's possible.



“I met The Connecticut Project when an organizer,

Brigith, knocked on the doors of the complex where I live. She talked to me about how she found out about how the complex was sold and was no longer income-based. She was telling me about how my neighbors were concerned about the increase of rent. I was concerned as well, because I knew I had to renew my lease soon. I was watching others who had to renew their leases who were left on month-to-month and had rent increases or had to move out, and I knew that sooner or later I was going to be in their shoes. All of it happened: some got 30–40% increases in rent, some had to move, others were able to negotiate a bit but the increase was still about 30%, depending on the number of bedrooms...

I then attended a Connecticut Project meeting to talk about what was going on. I got some good input and information from the meeting. I passed that info onto my neighbors in the community, because I was concerned about more than just myself, since so many people who lived [in the complex] were low-income. After talking more with Brigith and the organizing team at The Connecticut Project, I decided to testify in front of the Housing Committee at the state legislature about a bill that would stop landlords from increasing the rent more than 10% when they just purchased a building.

As a single dad with two kids and full custody for eight years, I know how important it is that there is momentum with housing affordability change.

It is good for people like me to come out and open up about things they are going through, to give a wake-up call to the legislative system and housing system for change. They don't know what people are going through, but if more people speak up, something might actually get done.

I'm ready to do more and fight more, because I know it's not just about me. It's about a lot more, and I'm ready for change.”

Jose

New Britain



MAKING A MODERN DEMOCRACY

When absentee voting was on the Connecticut ballot in 2024, we knew it was a chance for every voter, especially working people with busy schedules, to have a better chance at exercising their civic power. Leading up to Election Day, Yes for Safe and Accessible Democracy, a ballot measure committee supported by The Connecticut Project Action Fund, reached millions of Connecticut voters through advertising and canvassing efforts, and by complementing the work of a broad coalition of 13 Connecticut organizations that collectively represented hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents. In the end, voters approved the question, paving the way for the legislature to allow every voter the option to vote absentee.

“YES” FOR SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE DEMOCRACY:

- ✓ **Passed the ballot overwhelmingly,
with 58% support**
- ✓ **Distributed 10,000 postcards,
20,000 door hangers, and
1,000 lawn signs**

- ✓ **Launched billboards and radio ads in English and Spanish**
- ✓ **Knocked on 4,000 doors**
- ✓ **Reached voters with 129,000 phone calls and text messages**



BUILDING A NEW MOVEMENT

The Connecticut Project is building a movement to create opportunity. Our field program is bringing people together every day to gather insight about what our state needs and to work collectively to make our communities better. Leaders in our field program – neighbors who are stepping into their power to make change – are helping to build community action teams throughout the state, host events, knock on doors, and talk to people about what’s happening in their towns. Meanwhile, The Connecticut Project New Leaders Collective also launched in spring 2025, bringing together small groups of next-generation talent to hone their skills as community advocates, connect with each other, and bring their leadership back to their hometowns and our state.

→ **30,000+** supporters statewide

→ Community action teams in

**Waterbury, New Britain, Meriden,
and East Hartford, and soon to be in
Bristol, Manchester, and Middletown**

→ **15,000 doors knocked** in 2024

→ **100,000+ phone calls** made

“One evening, I was coming home from work.

I heard a knock, and I assumed it was Doordash. Little did I know, there were two people standing on the other side, willing to give my voice a chance to be heard.

We spent about 10 or 20 minutes on my front porch just talking about the issues that I was facing. And when it was all said and done, they invited me to attend their chapter meetings. I went not knowing what I was getting myself into, but when I did, and I sat in a room of over 50 people and they all shared similar fears and issues that I did, it was a relief, and I was so happy I came.

I left there feeling so empowered that I had joined the organization, getting out there and hitting the pavement and making a difference for the people of Connecticut.

So, organizing isn't just about meetings or flyers. It's knocking on a neighbor's door you have never spoken to, just to say, 'Hey, we deserve better.' It's showing up for someone else even if you're tired.

It's knowing that we are stronger when we act together than when we act alone. And it reminds me that **change isn't just possible, it's personal. It starts with us! Right here.”**

Christina

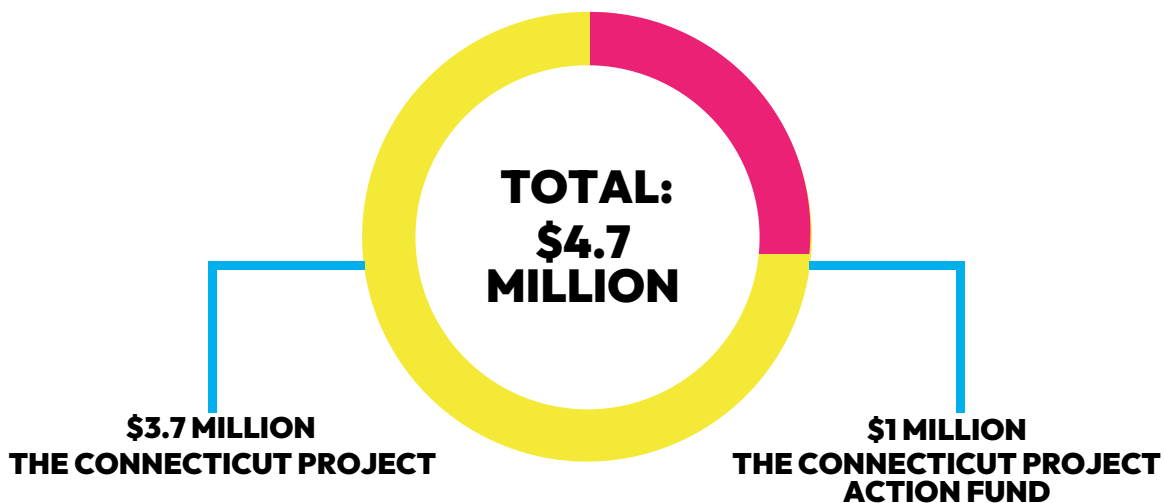
Plainville



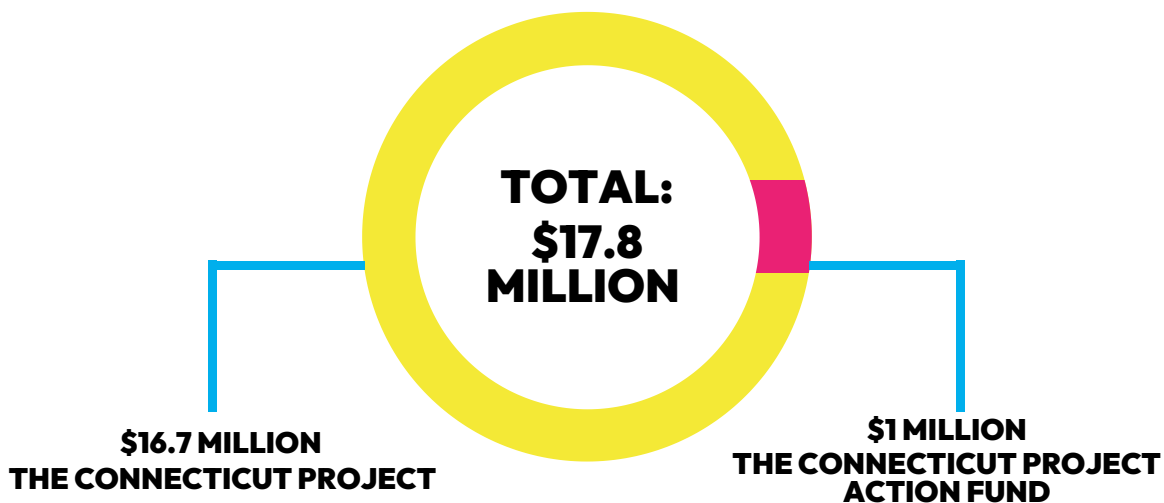
FINANCIALS

FY 2024

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES



TOTAL PROGRAMMATIC EXPENSES



The Connecticut Project invested \$11 million in 60 grantee organizations. We would like to thank each of these partners for their work. Together, you are also building opportunity for working class people, and we celebrate you.

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