

ANNUAL REPORT 20



ACCESS FOR ALL

CAU STRONG



MISSION

To provide community access through effective and comprehensive services to people with developmental disabilities, youth aging out of foster care and people with affordable housing needs, giving them the opportunity to live independently and to lead normal and productive lives as citizens integrated into the community.

VISION

We strive for our members to:

- Achieve economic self-sufficiency while being as productive as commensurate with their abilities
- Achieve independent living within the community according to their abilities, resources and needs
- Achieve a functional level of money management
- Achieve a satisfying social life
- Achieve a healthy lifestyle
- Achieve personal growth
- Achieve equal rights and self-determination

VALUES & BELIEFS

We believe all our members have a right to:

- Community integration
- Holistic interactions as valued human beings
- Equal treatment as citizens
- Equal value as members of a social action movement
- Choice and self-determination
- Real lives in real homes





FORTY YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



As CAU celebrates more than 40 years serving New Jersey, we continue to grow and seek out opportunities to provide the best programs, services and support to the people we serve.

This has included expanding our Intake department and marketing operations to address the intricate needs of families and individuals seeking services from CAU. Our Employment Services department has expanded to secure more employment partners in the community and provide more early transitional services to high school students with disabilities for job skills training and employment education. A new federal Transitional Living Program (TLP) for male youth, along with our TLP for female youth and our Basic Center Program all allow us to serve runaway and homeless youth. CAU also operates the Union County Youth Shelter, for youth-at-risk who are aging out of the child welfare system. These programs assist youth on the path to an independent adulthood.

As we moved out of an exciting 2019, our organization faced our biggest challenge yet in 2020, to protect the people we serve in the wake of COVID-19. Early in the year CAU began securing thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment and supplies to mobilize for safety. We enforced screening of all essential staff before they started their shift, in addition to cleaning and social distancing protocols.

Some of our services, including Day Habilitation and Recreation, were temporarily closed due to state safety regulations, and many exciting initiatives and events for the year were shifted or put on hold. Quickly, our teams worked together to develop and provide virtual services wherever possible, including Day Habilitation program, Support Coordination, the Academy of Continuing Education and Vocational services. These virtual programs are helping to ensure that members are still working on their goals and finding enriching activity while at home.

CAU continues to guide individuals and families through the greater options they have for supports due to New Jersey's shift from contract reimbursement model for services provided to people with disabilities to one of fee-for-service. We are confident that our future will continue to be bright for our members, staff and community partners.



HAROLD POLTROCK

President- Board of Trustees



BERNADETTE GRISWOLD

Executive Director

CAU serves more than 4,000 individuals and their families across New Jersey and continues to expand programs and services to grow our positive impact in the community. Executive Director Bernadette Griswold, who transitioned to lead CAU in February 2019, continues to pave the way for success to ensure CAU is enriching the lives of the people we serve every day.

Founded in 1979 by Sidney Blanchard, we started with a single \$90,000 grant and a staff of 3 to integrate 20 people in Union County from developmental centers (institutions) into the community. CAU now operates a budget of \$63.6 million with a staff of 1,000, serving individuals and families statewide to increase their stability, opportunities, independence and self-sufficiency. CAU owns more than 215 housing units in Union County.

CAU provides supports and strives to create an all-inclusive, accessible world where everyone can lead a fulfilling life as part of the greater community. We empower adults and youth who traditionally have had little support and no voice in society. We help people with housing, life skills training, vocational skills, employment, health maintenance, money management, socialization, education, crisis intervention, civic activities and community support and integration. CAU also supports opportunities for advocacy through training in assertiveness, decision-making and civil rights.

CAU provides comprehensive and extensive residential and support services that make the organization unique among service providers in the country. Our advocacy and recreation programs offer more opportunities for members to engage in their communities.

CAU empowers people with disabilities and youth at risk to reach their potential and lead productive, meaningful lives as citizens. From affordable and accessible housing to education opportunities and life skills training, the breadth of our offerings allows members to engage in what they need for increased independence and a meaningful life. At this time of great insecurity and challenge due to COVID-19, CAU is continuing to organize, expand, and seek out new partnerships and opportunities to support the success of the people we serve as included members of the community.

CAU recognizes and appreciates our staff and all of their contributions, especially in meeting the demanding challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic this year. Their dedication, skill, adaptability and sacrifices ensure that vital direct services continue for members and that additional services are successful virtually.

CAU's professionals are currently serving 350 people with developmental disabilities and youth-at-risk living in 60 residential programs throughout Union County, NJ, with another 700 individuals and families served in the community.

Our staff continue to make sure that people have access to the supports and resources they need to live full, self-directed lives. Collectively, staff provide residential services, create employment opportunities, serve as behavior analysts, coordinate medical and other services, and much more. Direct Support Professionals provide vital supports while offering comfort, companionship and opportunities for members to grow.

During this time when most everyone's lives have been dramatically disrupted, we recognize that our professionals supporting people with developmental disabilities are truly essential workers. Staff have demonstrated their strength and adaptability in navigating the current health climate while rising to meet unexpected demands. They are following best practices for safety, including wearing masks, using personal protective equipment and cleaning continually. Each day they are finding solutions for members and creating enriching activities for their mental and physical well-being.

We thank our CAU team for their tireless dedication to supporting our members, including serving as advocates to advance the rights of people with disabilities.





EMPLOYMENT

"PEOPLE WANT TO
FEEL PRODUCTIVE"

Employment helps put people on a path to independence. Our employment team at CAU works with members to help them find meaningful employment by offering college planning, post-high school education, prevocational training, vocational assessment, career planning, supported employment, job coaching and long-term follow-along supports.

Our employment partnerships continue to grow as we explore opportunities in new industries. CAU employer partners include New Jersey Transit, Newark Liberty International Airport, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Walmart, McDonald's, Galloping Hill Golf Course, Marshalls, Verizon and more.

Supported employment programs are approved by the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Division of Rehabilitation Services. Members have found work experience and employment in different fields, including hospitality, clerical, manufacturing and recreation.

In 2020, the employment team at CAU continued to support members working essential jobs during the pandemic and assisted members who lost their jobs in applying for unemployment and finding new work. In 2021, CAU will resume an exciting program providing paid summer internships to students with disabilities transitioning from school to work life, supported by a grant from the State of New Jersey Division of Rehabilitation Services (DVRS).

CAU also provides certified home health aide training to the public. Graduates receive an industry-approved certification to earn a living wage in the field. CAU's Home Health Aide Training Program is certified by the New Jersey Board of Nursing.



REGINALD PAYNE

Member Spotlight



Reginald Payne has a full schedule working at both ShopRite and Target in Clark. He has collected carts at ShopRite for 28 years and at Target for 18 years. “I have a good boss and my job coach checks up on me on Mondays and Thursdays to make sure I’m doing ok,” Reginald said. “I have no complaints.”

Reginald said he was glad he was able to keep his job during the pandemic and makes sure to always wear his mask when he is working. “We’re one of the busiest stores in the state and Reginald collects the carts outside and cleans up,” said Reginald’s ShopRite supervisor Bob Hibbs. “He’s a good dependable employee who’s been here a long time- he’s here every day on time and does a good job.”



HOUSING

"HOME IS A SOURCE
OF STRENGTH & PRIDE"

CAU believes that being a part of the community as a person with disabilities means living in a real home in a real neighborhood, as opposed to a segregated or institutional building or location. Our housing is located across communities in Union County, and we offer just about every type of housing accommodation on the market. Our members live in apartments, condominiums, townhouses, single-family homes and multi-family homes in urban, suburban and small-town settings. CAU also believes that being part of the community means being a good neighbor. Our mobile maintenance crew, which employs some of our members, is easily and regularly dispatched to maintain the properties where our members reside.

Our direct support staff in residential programs have provided on-site supervision and support 24 hours a day, while remaining diligent in preventative measures at homes. Weekly supply pick-ups ensure that staff and members have what they need for cleaning and sanitizing. All homes are equipped with backup generators and sprinkler systems. Members are encouraged to be involved in their communities and enjoy local amenities such as parks and shopping, and participate in education or employment opportunities.

Since 2018, CAU has created more than 30 new affordable housing apartments in Elizabeth. About 40 percent of CAU housing is accessible to people with physical disabilities. Accessible features include wheelchair ramps, lowered kitchen cabinets and counters, bathroom handrails, roll-in showers and tilted mirrors. Adaptations such as specialized fire alarms and doorbells are installed for those with hearing impairments. Additional programs include housing and shelter for youth-at-risk, emergency placement for people with developmental disabilities, transitional housing, supported housing and community rental assistance.





Mark Straka was the first CAU member to move into his own condo in Elizabeth after working with CAU to secure his Section 8 Housing. Unfortunately, his condo had extensive water damage after a fire in the building in fall 2019. CAU helped him move to a newly refurbished apartment nearby while repairs are made. “Everything was there for me in the new apartment, there was a dresser and a bed and a chair,” Mark said. “I am fine where I am now but I can’t wait to go back to my condo.”

Mark budgets to get his bills paid every month. “I give CAU my checks and they pay my mortgage, lights, and water,” Mark said. Mark receives this assistance through CAU’s financial management support services.



"WE ARE EQUIPPED TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES"



CAU is attuned to the unique health needs of people with disabilities, including ongoing medical and behavioral needs. Knowing that these challenges placed many of the individuals we serve at increased risk for COVID-19, CAU began preventative measures early this year and mobilized to limit the risk of exposure for members and the staff working with them.

CAU has a comprehensive health and behavioral health team, including registered and practical nurses, board-certified behaviorists, licensed social workers and licensed clinical social workers. Medical staff assess non-urgent medical situations, provide medical injections, care for wounds, and monitor medical situations. Our social workers and behaviorists conduct behavioral assessments, develop and implement treatment plans, facilitate groups for members and provide staff training on effective behavioral supports. CAU embraced telehealth technologies before they were required due to COVID-19 for the convenience of members to see health professionals virtually as needed.

CAU is following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and regularly communicates with experts and officials to follow best practices for the health and safety of our members and staff. All staff complete a coronavirus screening questionnaire and temperature checks at the start of every shift, and we maintain communications with them about what to do if you are sick, where to get tested for the virus, and what habits to practice to help keep everyone safe.

CAU also supports senior citizens needing help in their homes through our licensed health care service firm and Certified Home Health Aides. These services including care management, behavior management, dementia and Alzheimer's care, personal assistance, transitioning care and household errands and upkeep.

Our Assistive Technology professionals are trained and certified by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) and can assist with home modifications as well as procuring assistive technology and training members and families.



JESSICA GAETA

Member Spotlight



Jessica has a full roster of extracurriculars in addition to being a student at the Academy of Continuing Education. She is attending virtual ACE groups for music and theater, self-help, and visual and digital art, while also studying math and history. “The groups are going good for me right now, I love to be doing art and also studying it,” Jessica said. “I also love dance, especially lyrical, jazz and hip hop.” Jessica has been a dancer for more than 10 years and shows off her talents performing with Shining Stars Network. She also participates in the Special Olympics in swimming, golf and basketball, but her sporting and dance events were cancelled due to COVID-19 this year. “It’s been wonderful for Jessie to have ACE to look forward to,” said her mother, Eileen. Jessica has also been spending time dancing in a basement studio her family built for her and enjoys sharing her dances on Instagram.



SOCIAL LIFE

"A PERFECT BALANCE OF
SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS"

A healthy social life is an important aspect in maintaining overall well-being. Social activities at CAU are plentiful, with many recreational and interactive opportunities to choose from. Among the challenges of COVID-19 for CAU in 2020 was ensuring members have opportunities for meaningful social activity while staying safe. A "CAU Challenge" was launched in March with weekly creative activities such as art, cooking and fitness challenges with the chance to win a prize of a deluxe take-out dinner. The weekly challenges have supported local restaurants with more than \$35,000 in takeout orders while helping members at home have something enriching to look forward to.

Interfaith services and advocacy groups were among the virtual meetings organized this year, and new virtual services include day program, vocational services, and the Academy of Continuing Education. These virtual groups and meetings have assisted members to continue pursuing their goals in life skills, education and employment, stay socially connected and keep up with current events. All members in residential services were invited to join in virtual education with ACE.

In July 2020, CAU members, families and staff listened in together for a week-long virtual concert series fundraiser, and the Ira Geller Walk-a-thon was held virtually for the first time in September.

We look forward to resuming day trips, art and theater classes, overnight vacations, and all the other interactive opportunities that enrich our members' social lives as soon as it is safe to do so. Among these opportunities is the CAU Community Players, an inclusive theatre troupe of people with and without disabilities, with annual performances such as Hairspray Jr. in 2019.

The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council, founded by CAU, can connect members to a place to worship and welcome them into a community of faith through the group's many annual events. CAU also employs a Chaplain who conducts weekly non-denominational services for members who would like to explore their interests in spiritual community.



ROBBIE MATOS JR.

Member Spotlight



“I’m trying to stay busy through this pandemic,” said ACE member Robbie Matos. Although he misses seeing his classmates in person, Robbie said his studies still have his attention, especially math class, and he is continuing to prepare for his goal of taking a college course in math or science.

Robbie finished with the top third of runners in the 2019 New York City Marathon and was preparing for the Chicago Marathon in 2020 before it was cancelled due to the pandemic. “I definitely miss going to the gym and ACE, and my basketball team,” he said. “But I was able to take a vacation in June with my dad to the Outer Banks and we have been going on day trips to the Jersey Shore.” Robbie said he is staying in shape for next year’s marathon by running outside and continues to work at Staples once a week to earn and save money.



MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

"ALL PEOPLE CAN LIVE
WITH PRIDE AS EQUALS"

We understand that navigating the system to find the right services for your loved one can be frustrating and overwhelming. That's why CAU has Family Mentors who use their own experiences as parents of children with disabilities to help guide the way. Family Mentors can answer your questions and also host regular Connecting Families meetings to help families learn how to get the services they need, and make the most out of being CAU members.

Advocacy efforts are going strong at CAU, and our advocates have petitioned for the needs of people with disabilities to be included in COVID-19 relief. Helping Hands, the state's oldest and strongest self-advocacy group for people with disabilities, and the New American Movement for People with Disabilities, hold regular meetings and events committed to changing the social, political and economic landscape of America so that all people can live with pride as equals regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, and income or disability status. Helping Hands engages members and the public on education in voting, their rights, legislative updates, letter-writing campaigns, meet-your-candidate events and peer mentoring. In Jumpstart, the consulting piece of Helping Hands, members create and deliver trainings on topics important to them at developmental centers and workplaces. MAC Attack offers similar advocacy training for youth transitioning out of the child welfare system into adulthood.



ANDRE FOSTER

Member Spotlight



Andre Foster has not let his blindness get in the way of his education. Andre graduated from Middlesex County College with an associate's degree in liberal arts in 2019 and attends ACE while he considers college options to complete a bachelor's degree. "Psychology would be the route I would take," Andre said. "I like the study of the mind and neurotransmitters."

Last year, CAU outfitted Andre with an OrCam wearable device that reads aloud when he looks at pages, signs and more. "It does a good job and helps keep my eyes from getting tired," Andre said. In addition to his commitment to his studies, Andre likes listening to audio books and spends time gardening and going fishing.



SUPPORT COORDINATION

"SUPPORT COORDINATORS
MAINTAIN ONGOING
CONTACT"

The fee-for-service model of services delivery in New Jersey allows for greater choice and options for people with disabilities who live at home. Support Coordinators at CAU make these choices less overwhelming, guiding individuals and families in meeting their needs, goals and budgets. With a designated CAU Support Coordinator, an individual's state-assigned budget can be put to its best use with less confusion. Support Coordinators work with members and families to create, implement and monitor the right service plan to suit their needs and goals.

CAU support coordinators live around New Jersey and are knowledgeable about services available in the community, allowing them to explore professional and natural resources to improve a member's lifestyle. We also have Spanish speaking Support Coordinators. Support Coordinators maintain ongoing contact and meet face-to-face on a quarterly basis. State policy prohibits agencies from providing Support Coordination in counties where they provide certain other types of services, therefore CAU provides Support Coordination services in every county in New Jersey outside of Union County.



**PEDRO DELEON**

Member Spotlight

Pedro did not receive any services before connecting with CAU and is now working on socialization and coping skills at a day program in Mercer County. His Support Coordinator Elizabeth has been there every step of the way.

Elizabeth has also helped Pedro's mother Magnolia receive Supports Program funds so she is able to take care of her son at home. "I like working with her," Pedro said. "At day program, I like all the outdoor activities." He is also working on skills for job readiness. "The day program is very good," Magnolia said. "Recently we have been able to meet up with Elizabeth in person again and it has been helpful."



YOUTH SERVICES

" GUIDING YOUTH TO A
BRIGHTER FUTURE"

Certificate of
Employment

Youth programs transform lives and are comprehensive to meet individual needs. From emergency housing to semi-independent and supported housing, CAU ensures that members have a safe home as well as training and education to prepare them for a stable, self-reliant adulthood. Services also include crisis intervention, counseling, recreation services, and leadership and advocacy opportunities.

CAU provides the resources youth-at-risk need to start on a path overcoming their obstacles and fulfilling their potential. CAU youth programs include the Transitional Opportunities Program (TOP) which provides comprehensive residential services to youth ages 13 to 21, as well as the Union County Youth Shelter and federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Program and Transitional Living Programs. Youth enrolled in the TOP day program participate in an employment training workshop, a GED program, or volunteer job practicum for a minimum of 30 hours per week. TOP members may receive 24-hour supervised residential living, community services, daily living skills training, case management, advocacy and outreach, education in accordance with the NJ Approved Life Skills Curriculum, and drug and alcohol awareness education. TOP offers progressive housing-group home, supervised transitional living, semi-independent living and supported independent living.

CAU also implements the Pathways to Academic and Career Exploration and Success college and career preparation program in Essex and Union counties. In this program, youth prepare to leave the protection of the youth services system, and CAU is there to guide them to a brighter future with professional services and supports to help them successfully complete a post-high school college or vocational program.



NATALIE FLORES

Member Spotlight



Natalie is a TOP member who is celebrating her accomplishments this year. A 2020 graduate of Essex Valley School, Natalie was class president and salutatorian, and was excited to deliver her speech in an in-person graduation ceremony in July.

“Coming from a challenging environment and not having a typical support system was a struggle,” Natalie told her classmates. “To start high school and fail all your classes and then to graduate with a 3.6 GPA and be a member of the National Honor Society and be salutatorian is a tremendous accomplishment because I myself had doubts about my own success.”

Natalie will attend Union County College in the fall and plans to major in education to pursue her goals of teaching math to children in a juvenile correctional facility.

“[My support staff] have seen my growth and how difficult it was,” she said. “They kept trying to lead me in the right direction. They were guiding me in telling me what the real world is out there. They also taught me about credit and budgeting.”



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

"OUR PARTNERS WORK
HAND-IN-HAND WITH US"

Community partnerships are essential to furthering our mission of creating an inclusive and accessible community for all. The CAU Community Network is a team made up of CAU and our partners in the business community that meets twice annually to develop relationships while informing business professionals about philanthropic opportunities that benefit them and their community. The Union County Nonprofit Consortium is a group of executive directors of social service providers from Union County who meet monthly to discuss and increase organizational and community capacity in the human services sector in the county. The Union County Youth Services Network is a collaboration of governmental and community youth services agencies dedicated to coordinating a network of services for youth in Union County. Participants are invited to an annual conference to promote networking and better collaboration among members of the network.

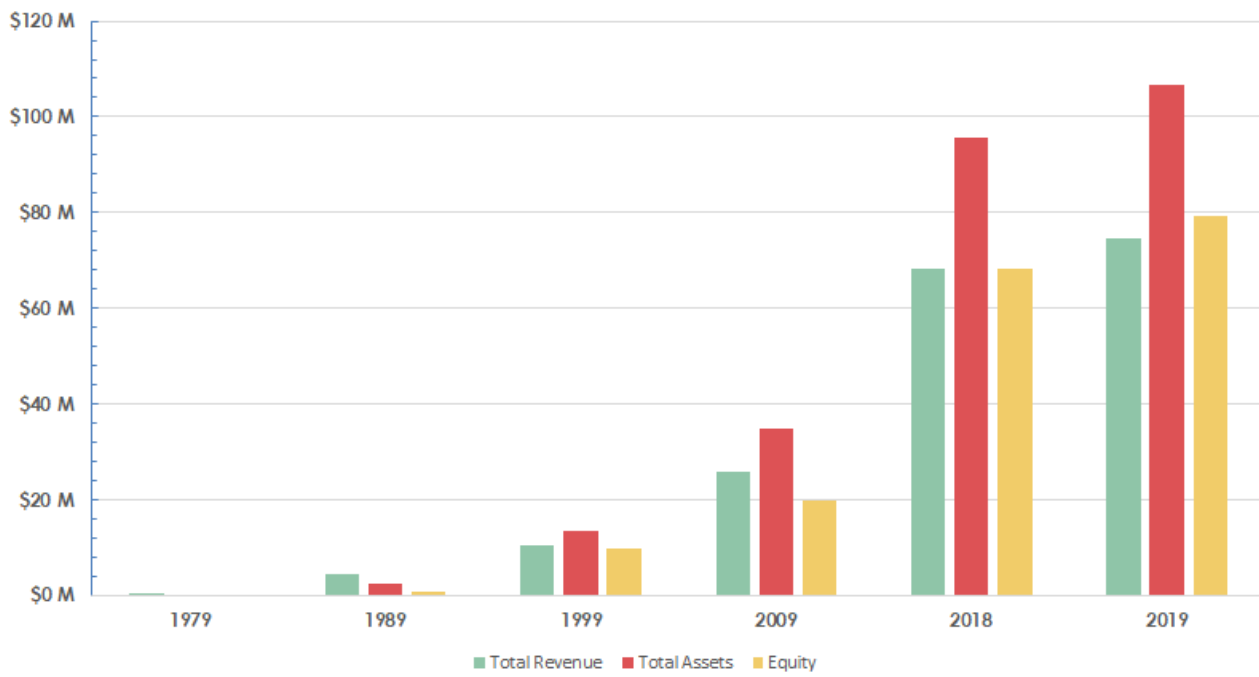
The Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council comprises more than 40 congregations of all faiths to promote inclusion of people with disabilities into their communities. The council hosts an annual Union County Day of Prayer and speed dating event to allow CAU members who are interested to explore a variety of faiths.



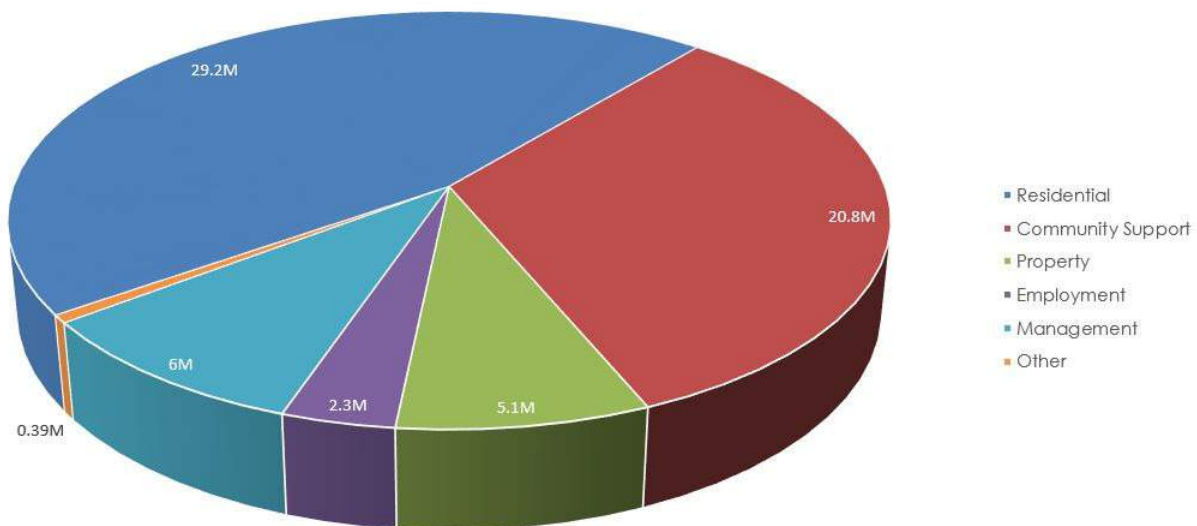


CAU is working with 9Sail to enhance marketing strategies and improve our search engine rankings. CEO Joe Giovannoli and his team have also consulted on many of CAU's investments in digital advertising to ensure the organization is stretching our advertising dollars to reach as many people as possible who may benefit from CAU services. "We help companies and organizations to build awareness and visibility online- we do that by playing by Google's rules and gain better visibility through paid search," Giovannoli said. 9Sail also manages a Google Ad Grants account for CAU to optimize targeting our audience. "We do find that a lot of times our responsibility and our job as a SEO provider is giving an education and we have really gotten used to working in that light...my team is very passionate about giving back and contributing to something bigger than themselves, so we are enthusiastic about working in the nonprofit space." In addition to being a vendor, 9Sail has supported CAU as a sponsor.

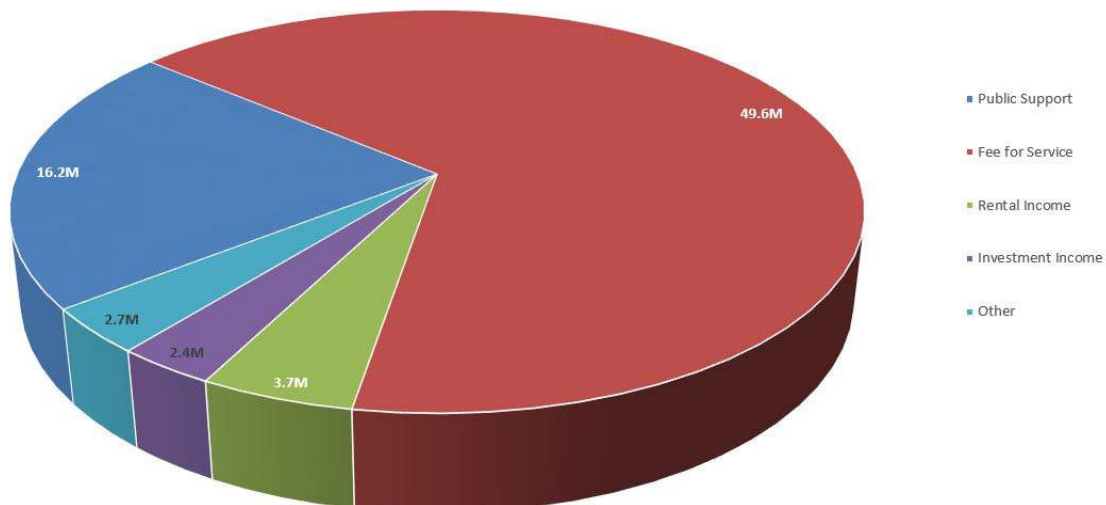
Financial Growth 1979-2019



2019 EXPENSES- Total: \$63.8M



2019 REVENUE- Total: \$74.6M



Platinum Plus (\$10,000 +)



**Union County
Savings Bank**



Platinum (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

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