



No Matter  
What

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

---



**NEW OPPORTUNITIES**  
Building Relationships to End Poverty<sup>SM</sup>



# Mission

To improve the quality of life for economically disadvantaged individuals by providing the necessary resources to increase the standards of living, foster self-improvement, and maximize self-empowerment.



# Vision

Building on roots and branching out to transform the community into a safe and prosperous place.



## Management Team

William R. Rybczyk  
*President/CEO*

Dr. Omar Andujar  
*Chief Administrative  
Officer*

Mark E. Kovitch  
*Chief Financial  
Officer*

Joanne Balaschak  
*Director of Energy  
Services*

Julie Turrell  
*Director of Human  
Resources*

Gawdys Grullon  
*Director of Research,  
Development and Planning*

Brian Bonds  
*Director of Residential  
and Integrated Services*

Steven Burkman  
*Director of Information  
Technology*

In reflecting upon 2023 there were three words that kept coming to my mind in the approach of the agency, its Board, its senior management, and its customers. Those three words embody a spirit that was never more evident than the 365 days that comprised 2023. Those three words were “No Matter What”. It would have been hard to imagine 2023 unfolding as it did.



Agency office locations in Meriden and its Early Childhood Center in Waterbury faced flooding within a week of each other in the summer. Yet the staff in those locations continued to support families and children without ever closing.

The Family Empowerment Division faced the tragic loss of their leader Dr. James Perry yet continued to support a record number of customers needing housing assistance, health coverage, state benefit assistance, and employment assistance. Record numbers of seniors were engaged to join the corps membership of senior volunteer programs.

The Energy Assistance program provided assistance to an unprecedented number of customers even though the program started a month later than normal. They also adjusted to a new online portal and an increasing number of fuel vendors partnering for customer deliveries.

The Senior Nutrition program needed to adjust to decreased funding availability with meal delivery being reduced to 4 days/week. In spite of this change the program continued to provide compassionate engagement to homebound seniors.

In the midst of one of the worst housing crises the State has seen the staff of New Beginnings Emergency Shelter, Meriden/Middletown/Wallingford Coordinated Access Networks, and Rapid Re-housing continued to seek and provide safe housing options for homeless individuals and families.

The staff in both Meriden and Torrington locations endured an office move to new spaces which will afford a deeper engagement with customers and community partners.

The Board of Directors experienced the retirement of 2 long standing agency champions who understood and lived out the agency’s mission.

Any number of these items could have had drastic impacts on the day to day function of the agency yet the staff, board, and customers demonstrated a “No Matter What” approach to ensuring that needs were met and the agency continued to adapt to become even more dynamic. It is in the face of adversity that the foundation of an organization is truly revealed and that was never more evident than in 2023.

In closing I look with eager anticipation to what the 366 days will bring in 2024 but I am confident that all facets of the agency will endure with care and compassion “No Matter What”.

Sincerely,

William R. Rybczyk  
President/CEO





My nearly four decade career with New Opportunities, Inc. has provided me with a vantage point that enables me to see how our agency's far-sighted foresight has revamped and renewed the horizons of those we serve. My ten year tenure as Board Chairperson has also never been devoid of accomplishment or accolade, due to the excellence of our services, as well as those who deliver them.

2023 supplied similar fulfillments as our Staff, Management Team, Board members and volunteers battled unprecedented financial pressures and record agency-enrollments to deliver a new generation of precedent-setting services to over 60,000 clients. The demands confronting social service agencies are historically greatest in times of economic duress. The economic instabilities currently buffeting the nation have become household realities for a record number of Connecticut residents now engulfed in poverty's shadow. Most of these people were previously untouched by economic hardship. Many of these new constituencies now seek the haven of New Opportunities services.

Their plight is reflected in some of our programs that now operate well beyond their budgets and enrollment- projections. This unprecedented demand have spurred us to devise a number of policies and procedures that have restructured our infrastructure, from intake to outcome. Streamlined intake and assessment processes now mate clients with needed resources within minutes. These processes also work with growing Technology-Networks that quickly link regional service providers with our client 's needs.

Whether it's examples, such as Early Childhood Education, Community Health and wellbeing, Senior Volunteer Services or Meals on Wheels, New Opportunities' offerings have always reflected the diversity of the clients and communities serve. Our agency's growing client-base is the common-currency that has driven us to establish accelerated standards of efficacy and efficiency that provide individualized services that build and sustain self-sufficient lives.

In recent years, the economy's evolution has unearthed needs that touch every audience we assist, from preschoolers to senior citizens New Opportunities continues to blend state-of-the-art initiatives with state-of-the-heart customer service that empower clients to construct their own tomorrows. Even after all these years, the promise of New Opportunities Inc. remains personal assistance that recognizes and respects all people's hope for better tomorrows.

Even after all these years, I'm fully assured our agency's horizons still reflect the hopes and goals of those who look to us as their stepping-stone of hope. My long history of service has convinced me New Opportunities, Inc. will always view the future, through the needs of those we so diligently serve.

Sincerely,

Rachel Perez  
Board Chairperson

## Board of Directors

Rachel Perez  
*Chairperson*

Melissa Green  
*Vice-Chairperson*

Maritza Rivera  
*Secretary*

Victor Lopez, Jr.  
*Treasurer*

Dora Bennett

John Burrus

Rosa Carlascio

Mary A. Conklin

John Davis

Cheryl Flanagan

Deneen Fryer

Gaylynn Hadley

Chelsey Harris

Charles Hoffler

Sonya Jelks

Joyce Kennedy Jones

Dr. Eddie Joyce

Alexa Keener

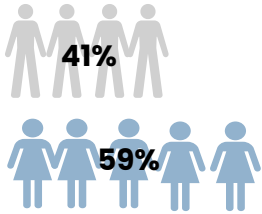
Michelle Saavedra Slappey

Belinda Weaver

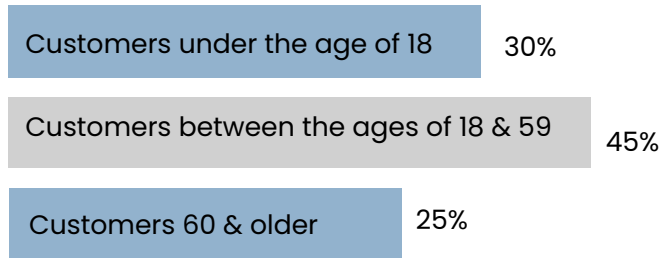
# Our Customers

51,821 individuals were served  
23,836 families were served

## Gender



## Age

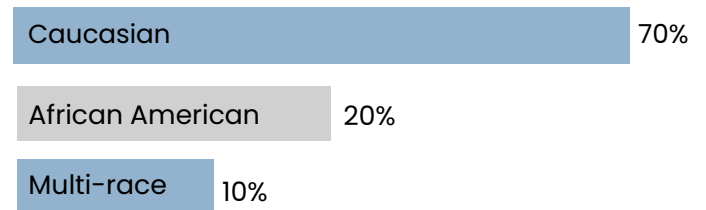


## Education

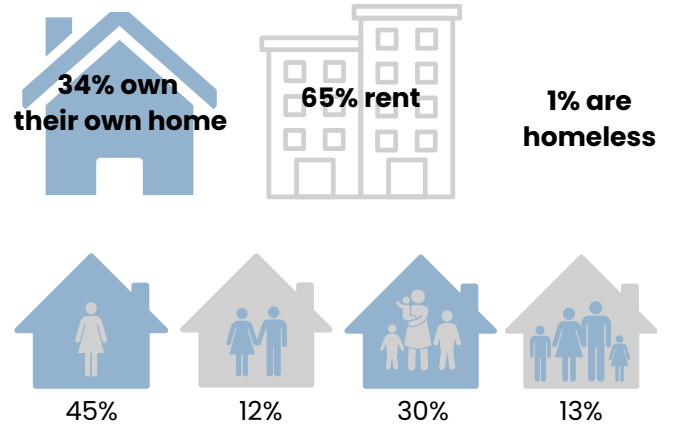
55% of customers have a high school diploma  
15% of customers have pursued and/or obtained a post-secondary education



## Race and Ethnicity



## Housing and Household Characteristics



## Sources of Household Income

31% of all households have at least 1 working adult  
29% households have a retirement income  
31% of all households are living on a total household income that is less than 100% of the federal poverty level



## Paying Homage...



Toni Hirst

Toni Hirst retired from the agency on March 31, 2023. Toni served the agency faithfully for the last 37 years in numerous roles across multiple departments before becoming the agency's Chief Administrative Officer for the past 17 years. In addition to her many responsibilities Toni oversaw our Early Childhood and Department of Corrections Residential Facilities. Toni had an unwavering commitment to the work and mission of the agency throughout her tenure. Without Toni's hard work and attention to detail the agency would not have successfully developed the Muriel Moore Early Childhood Center, the Bishop House Residential Center, or the North Square Gateway Terrace facility. Toni was also instrumental in the agency's

transition and oversight of the New Opportunities of Greater Meriden and New Beginnings Emergency Shelter operations. The fact of the matter is the agency would not be in the position that it is today had it not been for her dedicated service.



## In remembrance...



Dr. James Perry

Dr. James Perry, Division Director of Family Empowerment and Utilization Management, passed away in 2023. Dr. Perry served the agency in a number of roles and had two stints of employment that totaled nearly 20 years. He provided leadership to the agency's Therapeutic Foster Care programming, Family Development Services, Housing Assistance, and Senior Volunteer programming throughout his tenure. He also was a lead convener on the agency's implementation of a Culturally Linguistically Appropriate Services development plan & provided support to the agency's Wellness Committee. Dr. Perry was committed to the importance of a strengths based approach and trauma informed care as the cornerstones of any effective social

service delivery model. Any time the agency had an opportunity to take on a new program he was more than willing to offer his expertise and leadership. His work with the Wellness Committee and emphasis on staff well-being are principles that will guide the agency moving forward and honor his legacy.





Muriel H. Moore  
Child Development Center



**399** preschool aged children participated in Early Childhood programs

**17** infant and toddler spots were added to the program to allow more families to access an early education for their children

A playground specifically designed for infants was added to enhance their growth & development. As well, the toddler play ground was replaced to allow for more options for them.



A **sensory walk** was added in the hallways to add a structured and dynamic way to engage students' essential sensory systems



A S.T.E.A.M Lab (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) was added providing children additional opportunities to develop cognitive, language, social, problem solving, science and math skills. They are also able to engage naturally in dramatic play.



## Results that matter



2,000 homebound people received home delivered meals

2,425 people received emergency supplies of food from the food pantry



176 youth worked in summer employment gaining work experience and job skills

20 people were employed/trained through the Hydroponic Center



295 people obtained safe and affordable housing

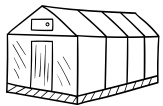
463 avoided eviction



50,031 people received energy assistance and stayed warm this winter



239 individuals experiencing homelessness were placed in safe and temporary housing



3 new greenhouses were constructed at the CT Food 4 Thought Hydroponic Center

26,000 pounds of lettuce was circulated to schools, food pantries, and emergency shelters



*Noemi, a Senior Companion has been engaged in her community feeling accomplished by the goals she had set for herself. One of those goals include becoming more involved in a senior living facility where she lives by aiding other residents that need companionship and assistance doing simple tasks.*

*Since becoming a senior companion volunteer, Noemi says her life has been enriched by the connections she has made with fellow seniors and the sense of purpose she feels in helping others. She believes that everyone deserves to feel valued and appreciated, and she is dedicated to brightening the days of those around her.*

*Through her compassionate actions and unwavering commitment to making a positive impact, Noemi has not only improved the lives of her peers but has also inspired others to join her in spreading kindness throughout the community. As she continues her journey as a Senior Companion, Noemi looks forward to creating more meaningful and fulfilling experiences for herself and those she assists, knowing that even the smallest gestures of support can make a world of difference in someone's life.*





*Quincy has been a Meal on Wheels customer since 2019. Due to his poor mobility and medical conditions he is unable to physically shop and cook for himself. Meals on Wheels provides him with comfort, safety, and security knowing he has a well-balanced meal to eat daily.*

*Quincy also participates in the Animeals program that delivers cat litter and food for his trusted companion, Masie, once a month. At a recent pet wellness clinic hosted by NOI's Senior Nutrition Services department in collaboration with the CT Humane Society, Quincy and Masie were provided transportation to the clinic where she received a wellness exam, vaccinations and grooming.*



## New offices!

New Opportunities of Greater Meriden has a new home!

The office is now co-located with their community partner, Meriden Housing Authority. The Meriden team to continue providing high quality services in a spacious, welcoming environment where the focus continues to be on CT DSS application Assistance for SNAP, medical, case management and mediation with landlords regarding rental assistance to prevent eviction. Along with this relocation, Operation Pantry, a partnership with CT Food Share, has expanded space to organize perishable and non-perishable food items for easy access to area residents.

The new space has created opportunities for Hartford Health Care to sponsor monthly health clinics along with their mobile health van. Monthly informational workshops on job seeking strategies, resume building and budgeting allow clients to meet in small groups to gain skills, ask questions and share experiences. The new physical space open doors for opportunities to engage area residents.



New Opportunities of Greater Torrington's move to a new office that is co-located with the Department of Social Services (DSS) offices has allowed a strategic partnership that has significantly expedited the application process for benefits, particularly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications, health insurance enrollments, and cash assistance. The seamless coordination between New Opportunities and DSS has reduced barriers and has provided clients with personalized assistance, ultimately improving their overall experience.

Additional collaborations have been established that benefit the clients in this community. A stronger relationship with Hartford HealthCare has promoted more accessibility to healthcare for those who lack medical insurance and face significant barriers to healthcare access.





*Jackie is a dedicated healthcare worker at Danbury Hospital and a single mother. She recently made a significant investment in her family's future by purchasing a condo in Waterbury. However, this purchase exhausted all her savings, leaving her struggling to keep up with expenses while juggling a demanding job and raising her children. She had been saving for essential appliances like a fridge and a dishwasher, but her financial situation made it impossible to afford these items.*

*In August 2023, Jackie decided to seek assistance and applied to the First Time Home Buyer program for help. Her application was swiftly approved in September, providing her with the funds needed to purchase the much-needed appliances for her home. She was overjoyed and relieved to receive this support, which significantly improved her family's quality of life.*



# Our Services

## Community Services

Operation Pantry  
Volunteer Income Tax Preparation (VITA)

## Early Childhood Development

Infant and Toddler Care  
School Readiness

## Employment Services

Connecticut Center for Advanced Rehabilitative  
Employment Services (CARES)  
CARES - LEVEL UP  
Connecticut Manufacturing Assistance Center (C-MAC)

## Energy Services

Assurance 16  
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)  
Operation Fuel  
Western Area Agency on Aging Elderly Fuel Program  
Utility Mediation

## Housing Services

Bishop House  
Freedom Walk  
Meriden Supportive Housing  
Middlesex, Meriden, Wallingford Coordinated Access  
Network (MMW CAN)  
New Beginnings Emergency Shelter and Hospitality Center  
North Square Gateway  
Rapid Re-housing



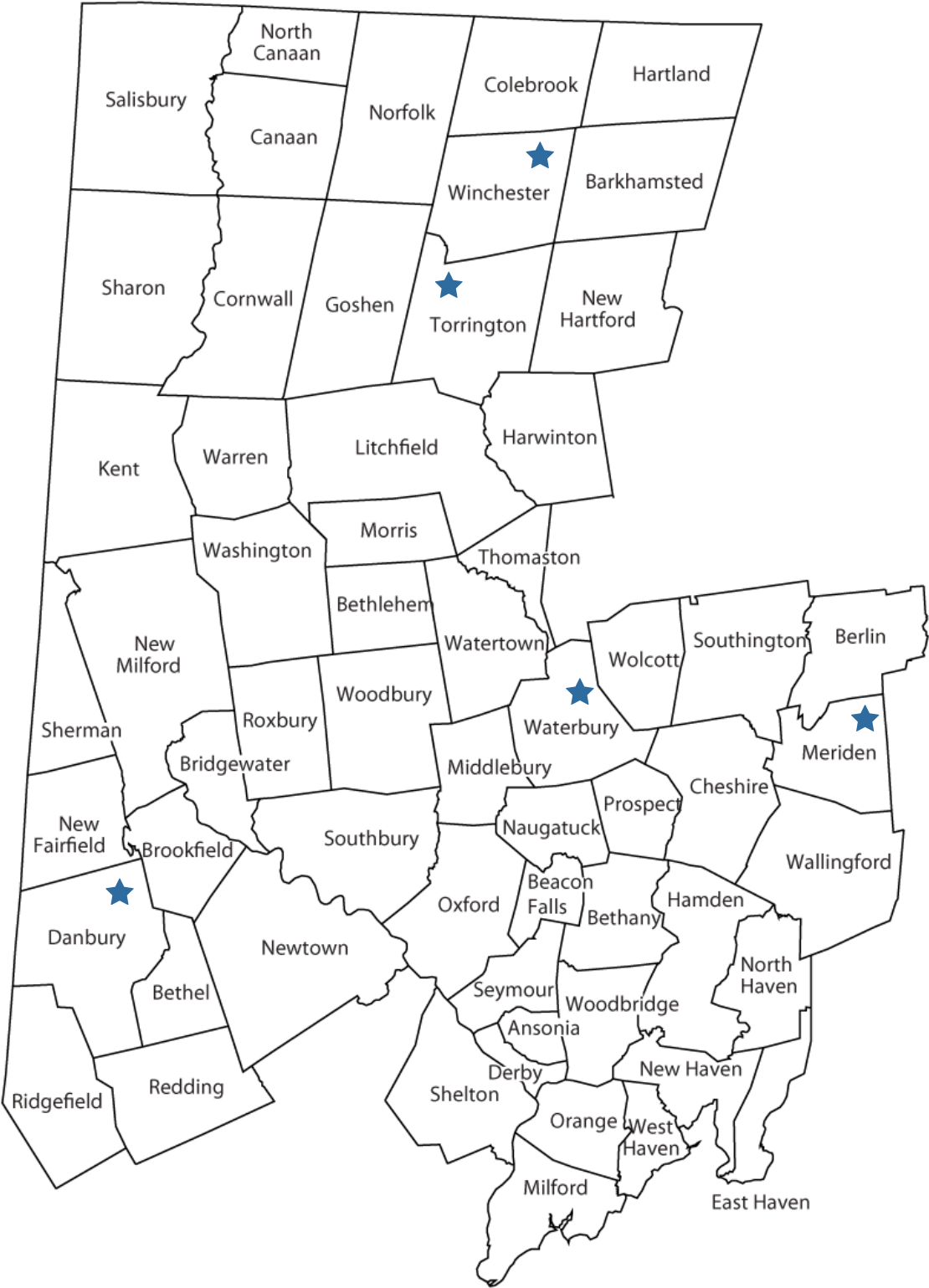
## Individual & Family Empowerment

Family Development Center  
Access Health Navigator Program  
Building Healthy Communities  
Case Management Services  
Community Health Workers  
Covered CT  
Diaper Bank  
First Time Home Buyers Program  
MyHomeCT  
Project Longevity  
SNAP Outreach  
Rental Assistance  
Fatherhood - Meriden & Waterbury

## Senior Services

Adult Diaper Bank  
Americorps Senior Companion  
In-Home Services  
CHORE  
Homemaker  
Companion  
Emergency Response System (Voice-Care)  
Foster Grandparents  
Money Management  
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)  
Senior Nutrition  
Animeals  
Conexion  
Meals on Wheels  
Senior Cafe

New Opportunities, Inc. proudly delivers programs and services to 60 Connecticut towns and cities located throughout New Haven, Middlesex, Litchfield, and Fairfield Counties.



★ Denotes a New Opportunities, Inc. office location

# NOI Supporters

## Federal Funding Sources

Center for Disease Control

Corporation for National and Community Services

U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Lead State Agency - Connecticut Department of Education

U.S. Department of Education

U.S. Department of Energy, Administration for Community Living

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

- Community Services Block Grant; Lead State Agency - Connecticut State Department of Social Services
- Energy Assistance Block Grant; Lead State Agency - Connecticut State Department of Social Services
- Child Care Development Block Grant - Lead State Agency - Connecticut Office of Early Childhood
- Social Service Block Grant; Lead State Agency - Connecticut State Department of Social Services

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Continuum of Care

U.S. Department of Labor

## State Funding Sources

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority

Connecticut Housing and Finance Authority

Department of Aging

Department of Children and Families

Department of Correction

Department of Housing

Department of Public Health

Department of Rehabilitative Services

Department of Social Services

Office of Early Childhood

Office of Health Strategy

State Department of Education

State of Connecticut Judicial Branch

Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging (WCAAA)

## Municipalities Supporting Senior Nutrition

Borough of Naugatuck

Town of New Fairfield

City of Danbury

Town of New Milford

City of Waterbury

Town of Prospect

Town of Beacon Falls

Town of Southbury

town of Bethlehem

Town of Thomaston

Town of Bethel

Town of Watertown

Town of Brookfield

Town of Wolcott

Town of Cheshire

Town of Woodbury

Town of Middlebury

*Special thanks to our "Buy a Wheel" campaign supporters: Food Market Place (Waterbury), Northville Market (New Milford), New Morning Market (Woodbury), Adams (Thomaston and Watertown), LaBonne's (Watertown and Prospect).*

## Corporate Supporters

Borghesi Building Engineering

Carmody Torrance Sandak Hennessey

Cornerstone Church (Oxford)

Montagno Construction

New Tech Haven LLC

NSD Partners LLC

UBS Financial Services Inc.

USI Insurance Services

## Other Supporters

4-CT

Access Health CT

Banfield Charitable Trust

City of Meriden

City Mission

Connecticut Community Foundation

Connecticut Health Foundation

Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program

Cuno Foundation

Eversource - HES IE Program

ION Bank

James H. Napier Foundation

Meals on Wheels America

Meriden Foundation

Meriden-Wallingford Community Foundation

Northwest CT Community Foundation

Operation Fuel

The Justice Education Center, Inc.

Thomaston Savings Foundation

Torrington Savings Bank

United Illuminating

United Way of Greater New Haven

United Way of Greater Waterbury

Wallingford Energy LLC

# New Opportunities Locations

## Full Service locations

Dr. James H. Gatling Human Service Center  
232 North Elm Street  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
203.579.9799

New Opportunities of Greater Torrington  
62 Commercial Boulevard  
Torrington, CT 06790  
860.482.9749

New Opportunities of Greater Meriden  
22 Church Street  
Meriden, CT 06451  
203.639.6050

## Residential Facilities





Bishop House  
31 Bishop Street  
Waterbury, CT 06704  
203.236.9990

New Beginnings Emergency Shelter & Hospitality Center  
43 St. Casimir Drive  
Meriden, CT 06540  
203.634.1734





North Square Gateway  
15 Bishop Street  
Waterbury, CT 06704  
203.805.4421

**Patricia A. Mayfield CT Food 4 Thought Hydroponic Center**  
360 Technology Park Drive  
Torrington, CT 06790

New Opportunities:

 :newoppinc.org  
 :newopportunitiesinc  
 :newopportunitiesinc  
 :newoppincorg

CT Food 4 Thought:

 :ctfood4thought.org  
 :ctfood4thought  
 :ctf4t  
 :ctfood4thought

## Satellite Offices

Winchester Energy Services Office  
716 Main Street  
Winsted, CT 06098  
860.738.9138  
Hours: Seasonal - call first

Danbury Senior Nutrition Services  
54 Main Street  
Danbury, CT 06810  
203.482.7924

Muriel H. Moore Child Development Center  
444 North Main Street  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
203.759.0841

