

## **Community Action Pioneer Valley Announces Lev BenEzra as New Executive Director**

*Proven nonprofit leader brings 15 years of senior leadership experience  
and deep community ties to Franklin and Hampshire Counties'  
federally designated antipoverty agency*

GREENFIELD, MA – September 5, 2025 – Community Action Pioneer Valley (CAPV), the federally designated antipoverty agency serving Franklin and Hampshire Counties, is pleased to announce that Lev BenEzra has been selected as the organization's new Executive Director following an extensive search. BenEzra will succeed Clare Higgins, who retired in July after nearly fourteen years of distinguished leadership. BenEzra will begin her new role on October 27, 2025.

BenEzra brings 15 years of senior leadership experience in the nonprofit sector, with particular expertise in partnership development, fundraising, strategic leadership, and operations. Her appointment comes at a critical time as CAPV continues its vital mission to assist people with low incomes to achieve economic stability and security, while navigating an increasingly complex landscape of community needs and funding challenges.

"Lev's combination of external leadership experience and familiarity with CAPV positions her well to build on our organizational strengths while guiding us through new opportunities ahead," said Board of Directors Chair, Charity Day. "Her demonstrated commitment to equity, collaboration, and community aligns with our values and mission."

### ***Proven Track Record in Food Security and Community Impact***

Since 2019, BenEzra has served as Executive Director of the Amherst Survival Center, where she led the organization to become the largest direct-service food security organization in Western Massachusetts. Under her leadership, the Center now provides 1.5 million meals annually to more than 11,000 people across the region.

Her tenure at the Survival Center was marked by exceptional growth and resilience. BenEzra successfully navigated the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic while simultaneously tripling the scale of food and nutrition programs, expanding critical partnerships, enhancing fundraising efforts, and improving the overall participant experience.

### ***Deep Roots in Community Action***

BenEzra is no stranger to Community Action Pioneer Valley. From 2008 to 2019, she served as Program Manager and then Department Director of CAPV's Youth and Workforce Development programs. During her previous tenure, she successfully grew the department, strengthened program outcomes, and built lasting partnerships across the region.

Her community involvement extended beyond her direct role, as she co-chaired the Communities that Care Coalition and actively participated in numerous other regional coalitions and CAPV internal committees, including strategic planning initiatives. This experience provided her with comprehensive knowledge of CAPV's operations, values, and community partnerships.

### ***Educational Background and Community Connections***

BenEzra holds a Master of Science in Management of Mission Driven Organizations, providing her with specialized expertise in the complexities of leading purpose-driven organizations. Her deep understanding of the Pioneer Valley region, combined with strong relationships with community partners and legislative delegations at both state and federal levels, positions her to advance CAPV's advocacy and service delivery efforts effectively.

### ***About Community Action Pioneer Valley***

Community Action Pioneer Valley serves as the federally designated antipoverty agency for Franklin and Hampshire Counties. The organization's comprehensive services include childcare, family services, fuel assistance, food pantries, homelessness prevention, and Head Start & Early Learning programs. Governed by an eighteen-member Board of Directors that includes six community-elected representatives from lower-income communities, CAPV embodies the principle that people who have experienced poverty should participate in decisions about how to address it.

CAPV operates on the belief that people are experts on their own lives and works to honor everyone's right to live with dignity while being treated with respect and appreciation for diversity. The organization partners with individuals and families to build access and opportunity in communities across Franklin and Hampshire Counties.

"In these challenging times, when so many families are facing uncertainty, and the very fabric of our social safety net is under attack, CAPV's work is more important than ever. I look forward to working alongside Community Action's staff, participants, partners, and supporters to build access, opportunity, and community," noted BenEzra.

"We are thrilled to welcome Lev back to the CAPV family in this new leadership role," said Day. "Her proven ability to scale operations, strengthen partnerships, and maintain focus on participant experience makes her the ideal leader to guide CAPV into its next chapter of service and impact."

BenEzra's appointment reflects CAPV's commitment to selecting leadership that combines operational excellence with deep community understanding and shared values around equity and collaboration.