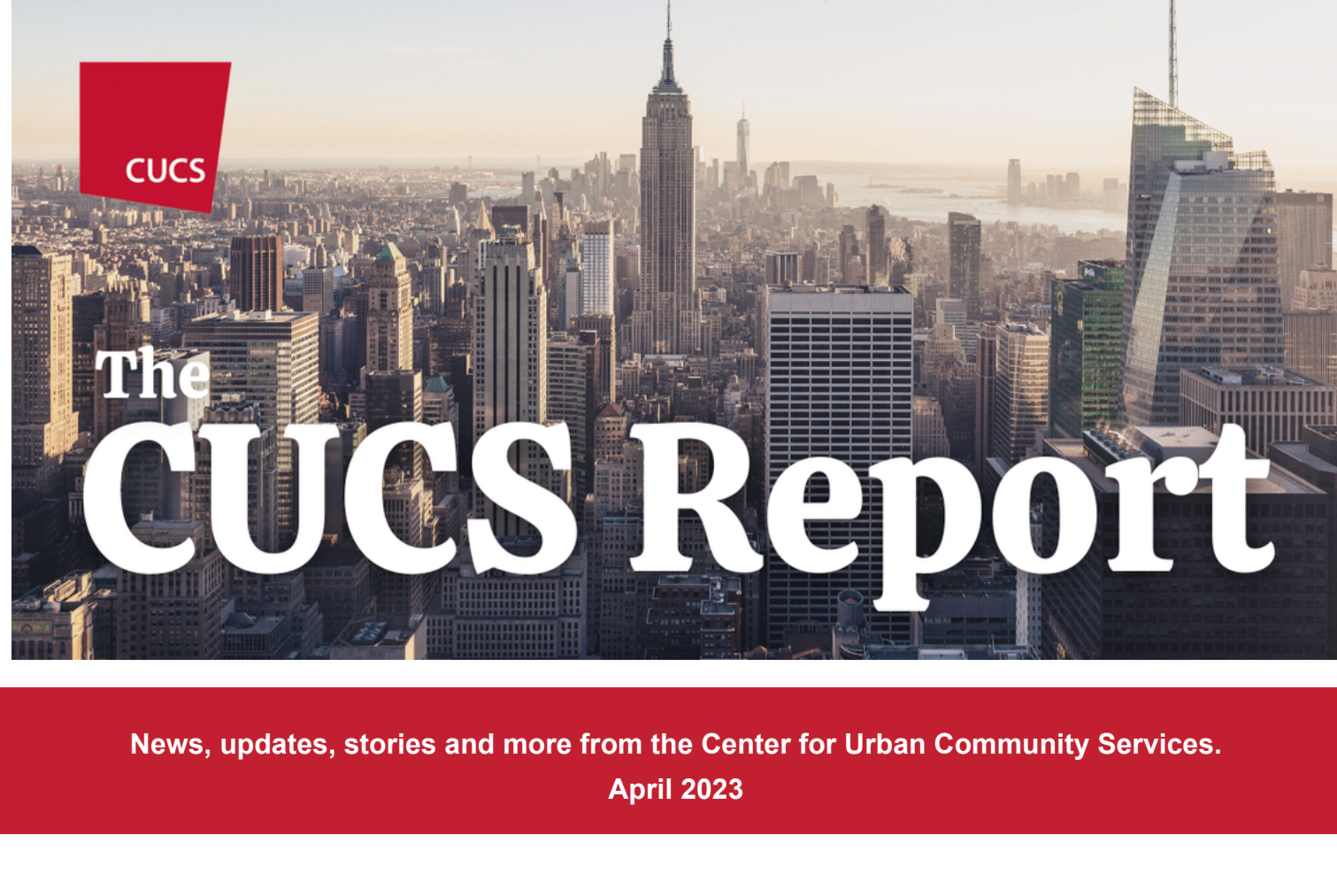


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News, updates, stories and more from the Center for Urban Community Services.  
April 2023

Dear Friend of CUCS,

In seeking to understand the issue of homelessness more deeply, we all have questions we're afraid to ask, or don't know to ask. The goal of the **CUCS Report** is to help inform us as we work together toward a solution.

In this edition you will gain some insight into how we help families who are experiencing homelessness. Their challenges are unique, and our family model focus creates opportunities for families and staff to work together to set and achieve goals for everyone — parent and child alike.

Our story about CUCS Connects demonstrates how CUCS staff works with homeless, formerly homeless, and low-income individuals and families to understand and access the benefits available to them and to give them the support and guidance they need to navigate an often complex system.

In the "Ask the Expert" section, Janian Director of Primary Care, Emily Gerteis, helps us understand how homeless people can access basic medical care and how Janian Medical Care builds trusting relationships with their patients to allow for more successful outcomes and consistent care.

Thank you for reading, and as always, we welcome your feedback and comments.

Best Regards,

Rise Roth  
Chief Development and Communications Officer

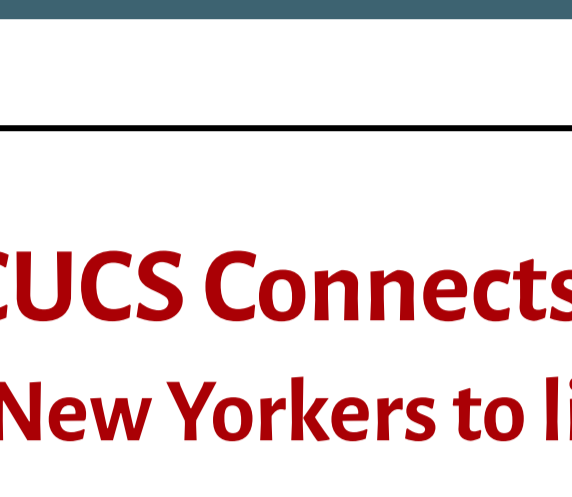
### *How we help families*

"Our collaborative approach to permanent supportive housing for families focuses on the family unit as a system.

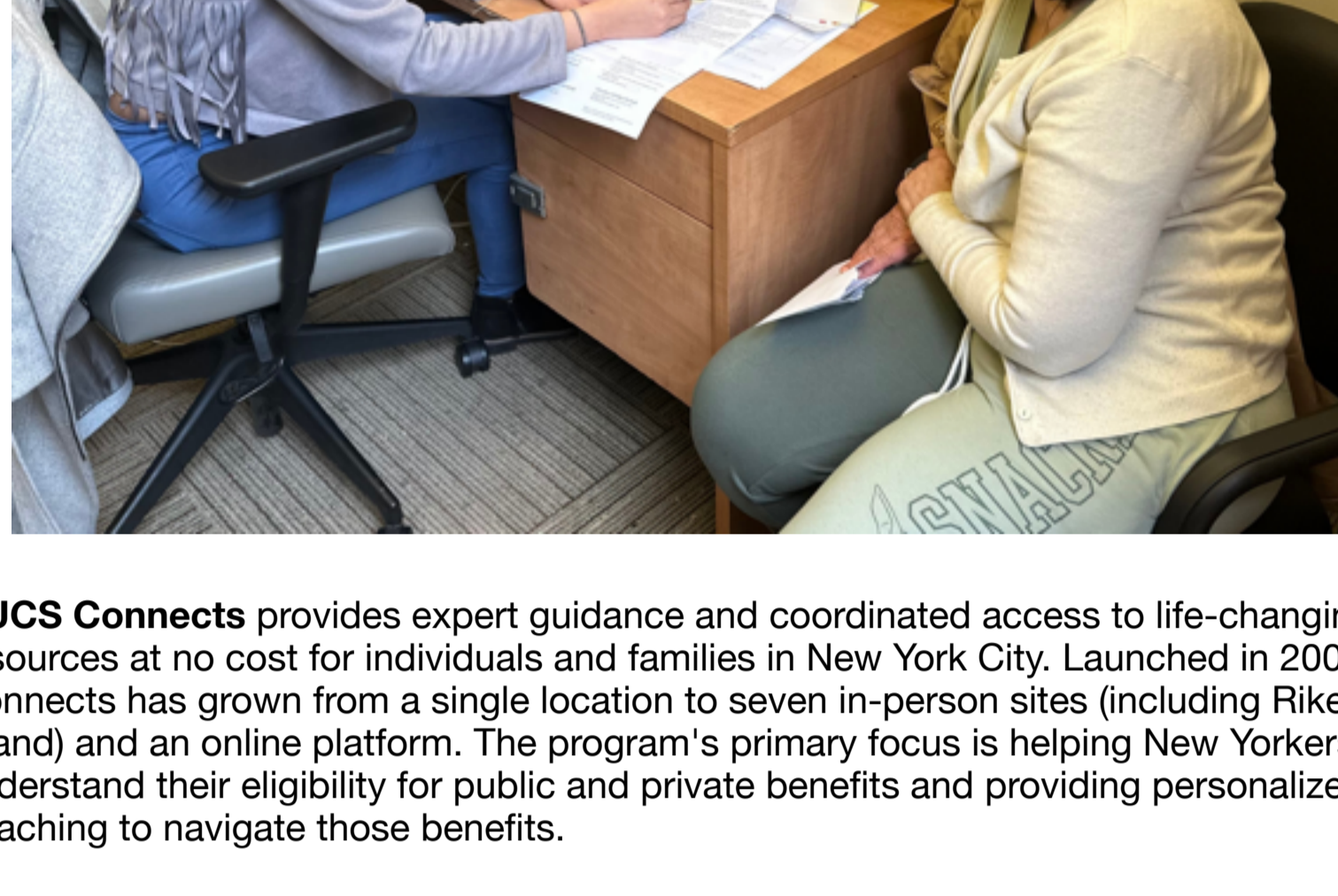
CUCS staff provide services that build on their strengths through onsite clinical services, education, child welfare resources, programming, and activities.

This family-centered approach meets individual family needs and supports growth and thriving in housing."

— **Stacy Matuza**, Deputy Chief Program Officer

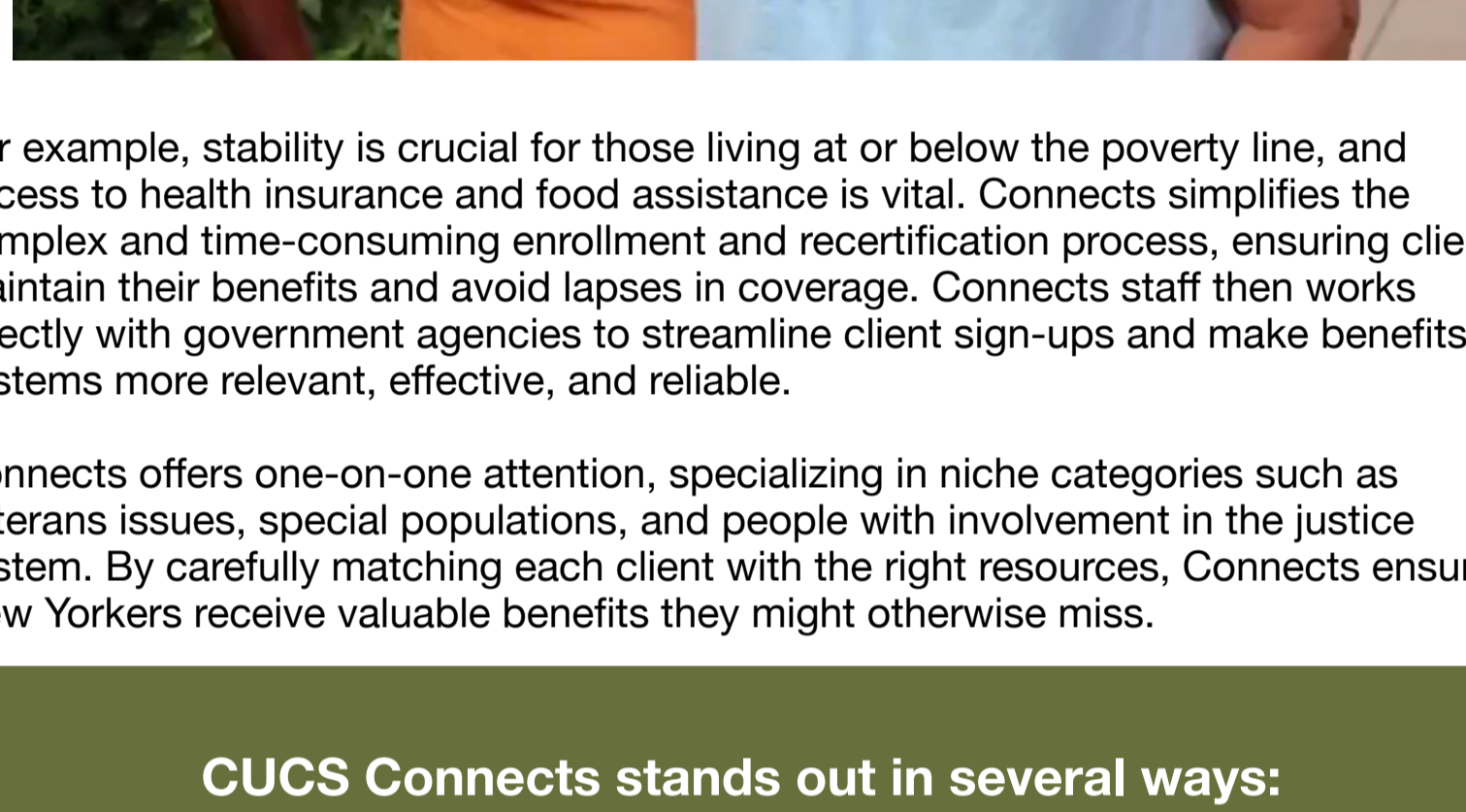


## **CUCS Connects: Connecting New Yorkers to life-changing resources.**



**CUCS Connects** provides expert guidance and coordinated access to life-changing resources at no cost for individuals and families in New York City. Launched in 2005, Connects has grown from a single location to seven in-person sites (including Riker's Island) and an online platform. The program's primary focus is helping New Yorkers understand their eligibility for public and private benefits and providing personalized coaching to navigate those benefits.

To date, Connects has served over 70,000 NYC residents, empowering them to access the benefits they need to improve their lives. As the world continues to evolve, Connects remains committed to adapting and providing exceptional services to New Yorkers and fostering stability and growth for those who need it most.



For example, stability is crucial for those living at or below the poverty line, and access to health insurance and food assistance is vital. Connects simplifies the complex and time-consuming enrollment and recertification process, ensuring clients maintain their benefits and avoid lapses in coverage. Connects staff then works directly with government agencies to streamline client sign-ups and make benefits systems more relevant, effective, and reliable.

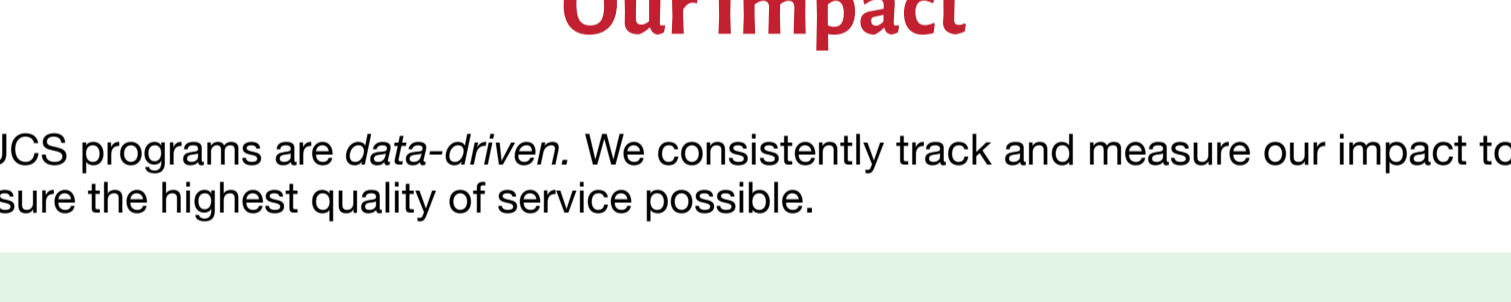
Connects offers one-on-one attention, specializing in niche categories such as veterans issues, special populations, and people with involvement in the justice system. By carefully matching each client with the right resources, Connects ensures New Yorkers receive valuable benefits they might otherwise miss.

### **CUCS Connects stands out in several ways:**

**Proactivity:** Connects stays current with changes in benefit requirements, eligibility, payments, and enrollment forms. This allows them to maintain reliable continuity of services and support for clients.

**Certification:** As a trusted partner of NYC, Connects' Certified Application Counselors have direct access to certain benefits systems, streamlining enrollment and accelerating application processing. This ensures clients receive benefits quickly.

**Effectiveness:** Connects employs resourceful experts proficient in English and Spanish who excel at navigating New York's complex benefits systems. With remote accessibility through phone, email, and live chat on CUCS.org, Connects reaches clients wherever they are.



## **Our Impact**

CUCS programs are *data-driven*. We consistently track and measure our impact to ensure the highest *quality of service* possible.

### **CUCS Connects - 2022 Statistics:**

**5,478** total benefits applications completed to support families

**1,658** households recertified or enrolled in SNAP

**1,034** households were referred to external supports

**761** adults enrolled in public health insurance

**493** households helped with applying for tax assistance

## **Questions... and Answers**

*Ask the Experts at CUCS*



Janian physician Dr. Lee Isaacsohn providing Street Medicine services in the community

**Topic:** Healthcare and Homeless

**Expert:** Emily Gerteis, Medical Director, Janian Medical Care

### **How do we help homeless people who can't or don't want to go to a doctor's office?**

Many people with histories of homelessness have reservations about going to the doctor. For people with serious mental illness, the hospital might be a place where they received treatments they didn't agree with; for people with substance use disorders, the doctor's office may have been a place they felt overlooked or treated disrespectfully.

Janian brings medical care to wherever the patient is staying or living, whether that's their supportive housing residence, a shelter or Safe Haven, or a patient's clinic outside of their supportive housing residence. Our providers focus on the patient's health goals to create plans of care. We believe that the patient-provider relationship is the most important part of the treatment plan, so we do everything in our power to build and maintain rapport with our patients.

### **Where do diabetic homeless people get their insulin? Isn't it expensive?**

Insulin is very expensive, and so are other prescription medications for diabetes. Because our clients experience extreme poverty, most of our clients have Medicaid healthcare benefits. Our clients who are undocumented immigrants do not have Medicaid benefits, however, so Janian relies on our partners at Health and Hospitals to help those clients get connected to NYC Cares, a program that provides healthcare and medications for uninsured New Yorkers.

### **How do homeless women access reproductive health services?**

Janian provides full-spectrum primary care services, which includes providing Pap smears, screening for sexually transmitted infections, and referrals for mammograms. We rely on guidelines provided by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and trauma-informed approaches, so that our patients get the health care they need, and feel safe during their examination.

### **Did a lot of homeless people have COVID? Did they get the vaccine?**

Most of our patients are vaccinated, and the majority are also boosted. We keep routine vaccines in-stock at each of our on-site clinics and on our medical van, including the COVID-19 Pfizer Bivalent booster shot.

Those of our patients that spend time outside were at lower risk and had lower rates of COVID during the early years; sheltered homeless folks were protected by the actions of the Department of Homeless Services, DOHMH and the NYC government, moving folks from large dorm settings to private hotel rooms.

Stay informed and follow CUCS on social media:

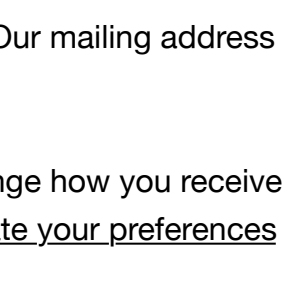


Thank you for reading the CUCS Report. Our goal is to make sure New Yorkers are well-informed as we continue our work to help people rise from poverty, exit homelessness, and be healthy.

The CUCS Report is a publication of the Center for Urban Community Services.

Do you have questions about the CUCS Report, our services, facilities or programs? Contact: [info@cucs.org](mailto:info@cucs.org)

The CUCS Report | April 2023



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