

## **We Are Ending Homelessness!**

Homelessness is an unacceptable and expensive problem: it takes too great a toll on human lives and imposes heavy costs that public systems (emergency services, jails, schools, hospitals) cannot afford to bear. Thanks to the support of Governor Malloy, his administration and the Legislature, we have made tremendous strides in building a system that is ending homelessness in CT. Through our Zero: 2016 initiative, we have housed more than 1,100<sup>1</sup> formerly chronically homeless people, and are on the **cusp of housing every person** experiencing chronic homelessness (the long-term homelessness of those with severe disabilities) in Connecticut— saving lives and saving public dollars. **We must maintain this momentum by preserving investments in solutions that work.**

## **Victories to Date**

- ☑ CT was recognized in 2016 by the federal government as one of three states in the nation to end homelessness among veterans.
- ☑ The HUD 2015 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report showed a drop of nearly 50% in chronic homelessness between 2014 and 2015 in Connecticut – the largest reduction in any state.
- ☑ The 2016 Point-in-Time (PIT) count (annual census of homelessness) showed the lowest number of people experiencing homelessness in CT, and a 13% decrease since the first count in 2007.

**Cuts to funding would reverse our progress toward making homelessness rare and brief, and happening only once if it does occur.**

## **Recommendations**

### **We Support Funding for Critical Housing and Homelessness Services and Supports**

- **Support DOH Housing and Homelessness line item--\$74M**  
Frontline homeless services, outreach, emergency shelters, and the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) are essential to aid those who have fallen into homelessness and move them quickly to housing.
- **Support DMHAS Housing Supports and Services line item--\$23M**  
Supportive housing continues to be the most effective housing model to assist people experiencing chronic homelessness and is proven to cut public system costs by up to 70%<sup>2</sup>.
- **Preserve DOH Homeless Youth line item--\$2.3M**  
Youth outreach services, crisis housing for youth, and permanent housing options are essential services to transition youth from crisis to stability.
- **Preserve bond funding for the Homeless Prevention and Response Fund**  
These capital funds can be utilized to create scattered site permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing and are critical to the effort to end all forms of homelessness in Connecticut.
- **Preserve DOH resources for Coordinated Access Networks (CANs)**  
The CAN infrastructure enables us to assist individuals in a coordinated and streamlined way to help them exit homelessness to housing. 2-1-1, which fields an average of 7,650 calls monthly, serves as the 24/7 front door to homelessness assistance for anyone in need. Since January 2015, CANs have conducted 16,632 intake appointments for shelter and housing services<sup>3</sup>. The Community Invest Act resources (CIA) at the DOH have provided critical funding to support the streamlined operation of the CAN system<sup>4</sup>.

### End homelessness among Families with Children and Youth by the end of 2020

The Reaching Home Campaign is committed to ending family and youth homelessness by the end of 2020. Our goals are to help families obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible and to coordinate with our federal, state, and local partners to ensure that families have access to services that enable them to remain housed and become self-sufficient. Economic hardship and psychological distress related to family homelessness frequently leads to increased involvement with and increased costs for healthcare, criminal justice, child welfare, and special education systems. Many studies have shown the significant costs incurred when a family does not have stable housing. National research shows that the cost of homelessness for families per episode is \$32,902<sup>5</sup>, whereas housing subsidy costs on average \$10,000<sup>6</sup> annually per household. Rental subsidies are the best known proven solution for resolving homelessness among families.

Rapid Re-Housing provides targeted financial assistance and short-term services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness who need temporary assistance to secure and retain housing. Rapid Rehousing has proven to be successful in reducing the amount of time families experience homelessness and the likelihood that families will return to homelessness— 95% of families served in rapid re-housing did not return to shelter after two years<sup>7</sup>.

### What it will take to meet our goal of ending youth and family homelessness

In order to meet our goals of ending youth and family homelessness by the end of 2020, Connecticut will need to invest in a continuum of housing support services for families and youth, target deeply affordable units and expand rapid rehousing.

**We must maintain the capital investments of the Department of Housing, including Affordable Housing FLEX funds and Housing Trust Fund, in order to end all forms of homelessness and sustain the progress we are making in Connecticut.**

### Reaching Home

Reaching Home is the campaign to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. With more than 200 participating organizations representing a variety of sectors, Reaching Home works to develop public policies, community support and resources that will bring an end to homelessness in Connecticut. Reaching Home implements *Opening Doors-CT*, the statewide framework for ending homelessness in Connecticut based on the federal plan.

1. From January 2015-September 2016

2. UNC at Charlotte (2014), Moore place permanent supportive housing evaluation study year 1 report

3. CCEH (2016) September 2016 Statewide Coordinated Entry Report

4. The CAN system costs approximately \$4.9M annually to operate and local agencies fund upwards of \$4M for the CAN system through leveraging their resources

5. Spellman et al. (2010), Costs associated with first-time homelessness for families and individuals. Culhane, D. P. & Byrne, T. (2012), Target populations among homeless families.

6. DOH, 2016

7. CCEH (2016), CT HMIS data FFY 2014-2016