

## **We Are Ending Homelessness in Connecticut**

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/prisons, 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.

**We must maintain this momentum by preserving investments in solutions that work.**

## **Major Milestones**

- CT was recognized in 2016 by the federal government as one of the first two states in the nation to end homelessness among Veterans.
- From January 2015 to December 2017, CT providers housed 1,948 people experiencing chronic homelessness, bringing CT within reach of our goal of ending chronic homelessness.
- Since January 2014, there has been a 62% decrease in individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (long-term homelessness with a severe disability). In September 2017, there were 197 adults experiencing chronic homelessness in CT -- the lowest number to date.

## **Unified Legislative Agenda**

### **Preserve Housing Supports and Services at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services at \$23.3M**

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>1</sup>. We must maintain the necessary housing stabilization support and wraparound services that keep highly vulnerable people stable in their housing.

### **Preserve Homeless Services at the Department of Housing – Housing and Homeless Services Line Item (\$78.6M), Homeless Youth Line Item (\$2.3M), and Community Investment Act (CIA) funds**

Continued investment in the state's rental assistance for supportive housing, housing assistance for homeless youth, and the Coordinated Access Networks (CAN) system (including emergency shelters, rapid re-housing, the 211-housing unit, and community-level coordination) is critical to maintain our progress.

### **Reduce Barriers to Child Care for Families with Children Experiencing Homelessness**

Families with young children under five years old experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable and represent nearly half of children in homeless shelters. Homelessness can have lasting effects, including traumatization, developmental delays, and decreased future success. These parents need immediate access to child care to secure housing, find employment, and achieve stability for their children. **Providing a 90-day grace period for child health documentation (i.e., immunizations and health form) required by child care licensing regulations would allow for immediate enrollment of homeless children in a licensed child care setting.**

### Identify and Educate Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Education is a key foundational component to keeping youth out of homelessness and preventing future episodes of homelessness. By improving identification and affirming protections that allow homeless students to stay in school, we can move the needle toward our goal of ending youth homelessness by the end of 2020. Ensuring school staff are aware of these protections is critical. This can be accomplished through multiple channels including **affirming in state law existing requirements for school districts to train staff about the legal protections for homeless students (including immediate enrollment provisions under federal law), working together with the State Department of Education to directly educate schools and key community partners, and connecting them with available resources to help meet the needs of these vulnerable students.**

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

The Reaching Home Campaign is committed to ending family homelessness by the end of 2020. Our goals are to help families obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible and to ensure that they have access to services that enable them to remain housed and become self-sufficient. The economic hardship, trauma, and stress related to family homelessness frequently leads to 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. Rental subsidies are the best known proven solution for resolving homelessness among families.

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

Connecticut will need to invest in a continuum of housing support services for families and youth, target deeply subsidized affordable units, expand rapid rehousing, and strengthen efforts to divert families and youth facing homelessness to housing solutions.

**We must continue to make capital investments in the Department of Housing, including the Affordable Housing FLEX funds, Housing Trust Fund, and Homelessness Prevention and Response 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. UNC at Charlotte (2014), Moore place permanent supportive housing evaluation study year 1 report