A Letter From Our CEO

Dear Friends,

I want to level with you.

We have not been doing all we can to end homelessness. When I say this, I’m not saying you and we aren’t working hard every day to assist people experiencing homelessness. I see how hard those of you who work on the front-lines are working, even putting your own health at-risk. I see supporters coming out to volunteer, deliver meals, hold fundraisers, and make direct donations. I know how hard staff at CCEH work, pulling in long hours, juggling way too many priorities, but always asking themselves, what more can we be doing?

No, what I mean when I say that we’ve not been doing all we can to end homelessness is that we have not fought hard enough to recognize and secure housing as a human right. And I say, the time has come to do so.

Now I know you are thinking, “That’s a lofty and aspirational goal.” Or “That sounds nice, but it will never happen.” Or “There will never be enough public funding to make housing a human right.” I know you’re thinking that because I used to think that too. But I’ve come around, and I hope you will too.

I’ve spent more than 20 years in the fight to end homelessness. During that time, I spent a lot of time making the case that investing in housing interventions is cost-effective, that it will save public money by reducing people’s use of crisis services like jails, emergency rooms, and so on. I spent a lot of time helping governments at the local, state, and federal level use data to estimate needs and set ambitious, but ultimately finite goals for providing housing and services—based on the premise that “if we could just provide a bit more, we can get to our goal.”

And using those approaches, we’ve seen success. We’ve seen investments in supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and other interventions. We’ve won over elected leaders and government officials who have come to understand that it’s cheaper to end homelessness than allow it to persist. And some of us have become really good at creatively patching together funding and resources to make steady reductions in homelessness, so much in fact, that we’ve come to actually enjoy this patchwork funding game.

But I’ve come to realize that we will never end homelessness this way. So long as there remain people vulnerable to economic and financial forces beyond their control, so long as governments continue to fund interventions only to the degree that their budgets allow, and as housing becomes increasingly a speculative commodity and financial investment rather than a basic human need, we will continue to see homelessness in America and the world.

And what if instead, it became a government obligation to ensure that people didn’t fall into homelessness? What if government was told it was responsible for ensuring that everyone have basic, adequate housing? What if people could hold government accountable for their lack of a stable place to live? Is that such a far-fetched idea? We expect government to guarantee education for our children. We expect government to give us clean water, remove our trash, keep up our roads, and protect us from foreign attacks.

During COVID-19, we’ve even demanded that our government protect us from a global pandemic. So why is it is such a far-fetched notion that government should protect people from homelessness and ensure access to adequate housing (and I don’t mean shelter, but actual housing)? And what if I told you that Connecticut already have a lot of the programs, strategies, assistance, and protections that would comprise a right to housing in place, but that securing a right to housing simply means ensuring that they are available anytime and for anyone who falls into homelessness ever.

If you are at least curious about these questions, please join us the week after next at our Housing Equals Justice Conference and Annual Training Institute. And in case you want to get a taste of what we’ll be discussion, take a look at The Push, a new documentary released about the work of The Shift, the organization leading a global movement to secure the right to housing.

Yours truly,

Richard Cho
CEO

Video Message From Leilani Farha

Check out this video message from Keynote speaker Leilani Farha from The Shift. Leilani will be joined by Rep. Jahana Hayes, and State Senator Saud Anwar to discuss Housing as a Human Right. Don't miss it!
Register for the ATI Today!
Digital Program is Now Available

Register now for this year’s Annual Training Institute and Conference! The schedule is now available on our website so check out all of the amazing keynotes and sessions and sign-up today.

The Annual Training Institute and Conference Digital Program is now available to all who register. Click here and register for the ATI to receive your program, including invites to all ATI keynotes and workshops.

This year’s ATI will be a week-long virtual forum for presenters to share cutting-edge thinking on racial justice, criminal justice, and economic justice now in the face of COVID-19.

Below is our schedule for the week with many exciting workshops and panelists. Register today for your exclusive access to the Digital ATI Program, which will include individual workshop registration.

And see below for a very special message about the conference from keynote speaker Leilani Farha of The Shift!
CCEH Store is Now Open. Order Now!

We are thrilled to announce our very first online store! All proceeds will go towards making homelessness, rare, brief, and non-recurring in Connecticut. Place your order right away!

Wear it proud! Available in many styles including t-shirts, hoodies, and baseball tees. Warm up your body and soul! Start each day right drinking from a mug that says it all. What better way to send a message than wearing a Housing Equals Justice mask!

Feature your Organization during the Member Spotlight at the ATI

CCEH is inviting current members to showcase their agencies during short virtual tours during the ATI. Tours should be 5-10 minutes and will follow a selfie video format of you providing the public a tour of your agency. If you would like to participate, please sign up below using our Sign-up Genius. Please make sure to select one slot. If you are not a current member organization but would like to participate, you can sign up for membership here.

Thank You For Your Advocacy

The Comment Period for HUD’s Anti-Transgender Rule ended this past Tuesday and we wanted to take a moment to thank you all for your advocacy on this critical issue. Now that the Comment Period has closed, HUD must review all public comments and consider concerns and contradictory evidence about the proposal before publishing its final rule. This harmful proposal would remove protections against discrimination for transgender and gender-nonconforming people experiencing homelessness, severely limiting their ability to access shelters and emergency housing services. And while we are thankful to have very strong gender identity and inclusion laws in Connecticut, we know that there are many states across the country that do not.

CCEH would like to say a special thanks to Attorney General William Tong joining a coalition of 22 attorneys general led by Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul in opposing the U.S. Department of Housing and Development’s (HUD) new proposed rule that would weaken protections for transgender and gender nonconforming individuals in HUD-funded shelters. “Discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression is wrong. Banning transgender people from using facilities consistent with their gender identity causes unnecessary stigma, isolation and harm,” Attorney General Tong said. “One in five transgender people in the United States has experienced homelessness at some point during their lives and this rule would make it more difficult for them to seek safe emergency housing. We will continue to fight the Trump Administration’s baseless and unlawful attacks against the LGBTQ community.”

Please click here to read the entire letter.

GOTV 2020- Are You Registered to Vote?

With only a few weeks left leading up to the 2020 Election, we at CCEH want to make sure that you have all of the tools necessary to help register your clients to vote. Below is a flier for you to share with your clients for GOTV. More information on voting resources can be found here.
HMIS Changes to Coordinated Entry

The HUD 2020 Data Standards and changes to Coordinated Entry, including changes to the 211 intake form, are all set to go live on Thursday, October 1st. All of the changes are documented in the Release Notes and we encourage you to register for one of the following training sessions. You only need to attend one of each session. Details and registration can be found here:

- Monday, 9/28 at 9:30 A.M. – CAN/Coordinated Entry 2020 HUD Data Standards
- Tuesday, 9/29 at 1:00 P.M. – CAN/Coordinated Entry 2020 HUD Data Standards
- Thursday, 10/1 from 1:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. – Open Support Call for CaseWorthy Upgrades
- Friday, 10/2 from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. – Open Support Call for CaseWorthy

Opportunities For Our Provider Members

Please look closely at the following Requests for Applications.

The HUD application for Mainstream Housing Vouchers is a chance for Housing Authorities to acquire subsidies that can serve people experiencing homelessness. And the CT Department of Housing RFP for Street Outreach is a new program, funded by the CARES Act, to create surge capacity in homeless outreach across the state.

If you or your community partners are interested in pursuing these opportunities, you may reach out to CCEH Senior Program Manager David Gonzalez Rice for some additional background and guidance: dgrice@cceh.org

Mattresses Available for 1000 Homes Clients

Thanks to the generosity of the CT REALTORS® Foundation, we now have 100 new twin mattresses in a box available to be shipped directly to clients. Mattresses are available to any client housed through 1000 Homes with one per household member. Please click here to submit your requests. Mattresses will be available on a first come, first served basis.

How You Can Help

Our providers need your help! This site includes ways you can join Connecticut’s homeless response.

Webinars & Additional Guidance

With information about COVID rapidly evolving, keeping up-to-date is more important than ever. Stay up-to-date by visiting CCEH’s COVID Guidance Page, located at cceh.org/covid19

Upcoming Webinars

Components of an Effective Outreach System (Session 2)
Wednesday, September 30, 2020
11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

APR Bootcamp
Wednesday, October 14th, 2020
11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Motivational Interviewing Workshop
Thursday, October 29th & Friday, October 30th, 2020
9 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Previously Recorded Webinars

- Components of an Effective Outreach System
- How Vulnerable is the Homeless Population to COVID-19? Results from a National Study
- Addressing Racialized Trauma and Actively Engaging in Anti-Racism
- Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic (Session 2)
- Having a Harm Reduction Approach During a Pandemic (Session 1)
- Update on the Status of Evictions in CT During the COVID-19 Crisis
- Working with Landlords to Rapidly House Successfully; Recruiting, Engaging and Retaining

Please click here to access our entire webinar catalog.

CCEH in the News

EDITORIAL: Help for youth and veterans in Meriden
My Record Journal - September 2020