Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe March is already upon us, and as we look forward to thoughts of spring and nature returning in full bloom, we still have potentially several more weeks of winter weather. For those who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness in our state, these are difficult times.

Many of you may know the annual ‘Point in Time’ count usually involves sending volunteers out on a single night in January to canvass the state in search of those experiencing unsheltered homeless. This year, due to COVID, we pivoted to a data-driven approach that relied entirely on our outreach professionals and their year-round data collection in our statewide system. We believe this is a more accurate means to fully understand how many are experiencing unsheltered homelessness in our state.

An exciting addition to our year-round data collection includes a new mobile application. This ‘app’ is intended for anyone across the state who encounters an individual in a place not meant for human habitation to record as much information as possible. This will help our system identify where unsheltered individuals or families may be living across our state. If you know of a person experiencing homelessness in your town, we encourage you to contact you to use the app to record that person so the appropriate folks can work to get the person the services and help they may need. This ‘app’ is not meant to replace a call to 2-1-1 but instead it is another tool to capture data and connect people in need when a call to 2-1-1 is not possible. You can find out more information and how to access the app by visiting our website at cceh.org/pit/overview.

May you enjoy all the signs of spring, including the increased daylight and hope that it brings. Thank you also for considering partnering with us in our efforts to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

Yours truly,

[Linda Casey signature]
Linda Casey, MS, MPH
Director of HMIS and Strategic Analysis

Your Testimony Wanted

Please help us to stop the revolving door between homelessness and incarceration once and for all!

On Wednesday, March 10th the Judiciary Committee will be hearing S.B. 987, An Act Concerning Reinvestment of Savings Achieved Through a Reduction in Correctional Facility Population Into Reentry and Community-based Services and Programs.

CCEH is advocating for Creation of a ‘reentry housing assistance’ line item within the Department of Correction budget and reallocate no less than $2 million annually to contract with community-based organizations to provide housing-related case management, housing search and navigation, temporary rental assistance, and other basic needs for any inmate assessed as needing reentry housing assistance.

Email your written in Word or PDF testimony to: Judtestimony@cga.ct.gov

To provide verbal testimony during the hearing:
- You must register using the On-line Testimony Registration Form. Registration closes on March 9 at 3:00 P.M.
- To register to testify by phone, call the Phone Registrant Line at: 860.240.5255
- Speaker order will be posted on the Judiciary Committee Testimony Page for 3/10/2021 by March 9th at 8:00 P.M.
- Testimony is limited to three (3) minutes

Please email Sarah Fox at sfox@cceh.org if you need any further information.

You Can Still Submit Testimony to the Housing Committee in Support of S.B. 194 by March 19th

We were very impressed by the number of people who submitted testimony to Housing Committee yesterday supporting S.B. 194, a landmark piece of legislation expressing the state’s commitment to progressively implement policies to respect, protect, and fulfill a right to affordable, decent, safe, and stable housing. The passion and commitment of the people who testified shined through the screen and you can watch it by clicking here.

This bill comes at a time when housing and health matter more than ever. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, we are witnessing why we have fought so long for safe and healthy housing for everyone in Connecticut, especially for those who are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness: youth, communities of color, transgender and gender non-conforming people, people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans. For more details see our Fact Sheet.
S.B. 194 is currently before the Housing Committee. Please help us advance the bill by submitting testimony to the Housing Committee! Testimony can be emailed to: HSGtestimony@cga.ct.gov by March 19.

If you are interested in joining this movement, and fighting for a right to housing in Connecticut, please email Carl Asikainen at casikainen@cceh.org. Click here for the Right to Housing bill summary and fact sheet.
We were thrilled to have so many municipal employees interested in getting involved in My Town Cares, CCEH’s partnership with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and Sustainable CT to engage towns in ending homelessness locally and around the state.

Please note that March 9th is last day that CCEH will hold technical assistance office hours for municipalities from 1-2 P.M. and for municipal employees from 2:30-3:30 P.M.

CCEH and Sustainable CT will be offering a Shelter Diversion training on March 18th that will address strategies to prevent homelessness at the front door by helping people identify immediate alternative housing arrangements to shelter and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing. Please click here to register.

You can also join Sustainable CT Coffee Hour for an informal discussions the third Friday of each month. They will share program updates and resources, explore your questions, and strengthen the network of Sustainable CT champions. These sessions are open to all and will be recorded. Please click here to register.

For background information on this campaign please click here.

CCEH Launches #IamEssential Campaign

Thanks to our friends at Open Door Shelter who had the original idea for showcasing their staff on social media with the hashtag #IamEssential we have adopted this concept and would like the entire coalition to participate.

This legislative session we are actively advocating for S.B. 340 to ensure that funding levels for homelessness and housing assistance services reflect the
true cost of services delivery, to pay adequate wages to front-line workers who staff shelters, Coordinated Access Network appointments, homeless outreach, housing navigation and case management services.

Our frontline staff have been considered essential workers during the pandemic and they are putting their lives and health on the line to help individuals every day. Please take a moment to share the story of the essential work your staff is doing to keep people safe and participate in our #IAmEssential Social Media Campaign. Please email Allan Vega at avega@cceh.org with a photo of your staff member and a quote of why their work is important. We will tag your organization in every post, so you can repost it. Please make sure you use the hashtags: #IAmEssential and #SB340. Thank you for being a partner in this effort.

These are sample posts that will published on our social media account next week.

Marlynn Becker from Always Home

Hannah from Alpha Community Services YMCA

The Great Give 2021

We’re counting down the days to May 4th - 5th and The Great Give® 2021. We need your help to make our campaign a success.

We will be using our newsletter and social media accounts to provide you with updates and reminders about this fundraising effort. In the meantime, tell your friends and family members about the important work we do and ask them to join us in helping us end homelessness in Connecticut.

Assessment of Community Data Needs Around Homelessness

The Reaching Home Data and Accountability (D&A) Workgroup would like your feedback on how data around homelessness are being used and where there
may be unmet data needs. The D&A Workgroup will analyze the survey data and use this information to prioritize data initiatives and identify resources to implement these initiatives. We strongly encourage as many people as possible throughout the housing and homeless service system in Connecticut to participate.

Please click here to access the survey. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Feel free to share the survey link with colleagues and others in your network. Please complete the survey by March 15th.

Your Voice Matters to Us! Join the CT Race Equity Network (REN) Today

CT-REN is looking for new members!

The purpose of the CT REN is to advance the work of centering race equity in efforts to address housing and homelessness disparities in Connecticut. It provides a platform for stakeholders to share, collaboratively develop, and coordinate anti-racist projects and initiatives that advance racially-equitable housing outcomes.

Our intent is to create a safe space for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color. Allies are welcomed.

Applications are due by Monday, March 22nd, 2021. Please feel free to share the flyer broadly within your network. Click here to apply.

We look forward to being in community with you all!

COVID-19 Vaccine Resources for Homeless Shelter Providers

CCEH and our members has helped ensure that the current phase of Connecticut’s COVID-19 vaccine distribution include residents and staff of homeless shelters.

Connecticut shelters began receiving the COVID-19 vaccine as part of the Governor’s plan to serve congregate settings through Phase 1b. Several shelters have been served with many more scheduled in the coming weeks. CCEH continues to coordinate with DOH to monitor progress in reaching this key population. Please click here if you want more information on vaccine access for congregate settings.

CCEH encourages you to monitor communications on the State’s website.
Please also feel free to contact us at info@cceh.org (Subject: COVID-19 vaccines) if you need more information or need any assistance.

Please utilize the following resources from HUD for your organization:

- How to Build Staff Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccine
- Preparing Staff for the COVID-19 Vaccine: Communication and Confidence Checklist
- Preparing Staff for the COVID-19 Vaccine: Meeting Template
- COVID-19 Vaccination Conversation Tips for Homeless Service Providers

We also encourage shelter providers to check the CDC's toolkit for additional valuable resources.

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**Resources for Providers**

Remote Supervision Tips for Homeless System Providers (HUD)

Rapid Rehousing Ramp up (HUD)

Guide to Using the IRS Non-Filers Tool to Get an Economic Impact Payment (IRS)

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**How You Can Help**

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

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**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 Trainings:**

**Advanced Motivational Interviewing and Case Planning Workshop**
Tuesday, March 16 & Friday, March 19
9 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Join the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and international author, Raymond Chip Tafrate, PhD, for fast-paced, virtual, interactive learning sessions that will focus on cutting-edge applications of Motivational Interviewing. Participants will increase their overall MI proficiency by participating in advanced exercises targeting the core skills of reflecting and summarizing. Participants will fine-tune their ability to recognize, reinforce, and respond to key client verbalizations to set the stage for developing an effective case plan. Register now.
Shelter Diversion 101 Training
Thursday, March 18th
11 A.M. -12:30 P.M.

This webinar will thoroughly discuss the practice of shelter diversion; including staying housing focused, how to conduct a diversion conversation, how to access diversion funding, linkage to services and community resources, and special considerations to have during the COVID-19 crisis. Register now.

This Week's Featured Webinar:

[Image of young people]

Working with Youth

Previously Recorded Webinars:

- My Town Cares
- PIT 'People Count' Training in the PIT Database
- Reporting the Unsheltered Homeless Population
- PIT 2021: Using the new PIT Outreach Program
- Shelter Diversion 101 Training
- Cleaning Up Your System Performance Measures
- Rights of and Resources for the Most Vulnerable Populations
- 2021 Housing Inventory Count (HIC) Training

Please click here to access our entire webinar catalog.

CCEH in the News

Committee Debates Housing As A Human Right Bill
NBC Connecticut | March 2021

Committee on Housing to hold hearing Thursday on right to housing bill
The Day | March 2021

New data: The revolving door between homeless shelters and prisons in Connecticut