

RESCUE THE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

FACT SHEET—Fund The Cold Weather Emergency Response Program



The Current Situation

Connecticut's Homeless Response System has been historically underfunded. The pandemic and the increase in homelessness in our state, **up 39%*** this year, has put added pressure on an already overstressed system. Rising costs, including payroll, health insurance, utilities and rent, have made matters more dire, further challenging the nonprofits providing critical homeless services.

Emergency shelters are at or near capacity. Warming centers are active and are an integral part of the Governor's severe cold weather protocol. Although they are at capacity, no one is turned away. And right now, our homeless response system, and by extension, the Cold Weather Emergency Response Program that falls under it, is operating in all-hands on deck mode. It needs a helping hand.

**By-Name-List Version 1 (BNL V.1) 2021-2022*

What is the Cold Weather Emergency Response Program?

The Cold Weather Emergency Response Program offers a warm, safe shelter to those who are outdoors in the coldest part of the year.

The Need

Currently, funding for Connecticut's Cold Weather Emergency Response Program is cobbled together at the community level, with a small allocation provided by the Connecticut Department of Housing. This is untenable for both the community-based providers who operate the Cold Weather Response Program and the many vulnerable residents it services. Every year, winter comes; and yet the funding doesn't. It is time to put the funding in place to give people a warm, safe place during our most extreme cold weather emergencies and adequately fund the community-based providers who operate the program in each community.

Budget Request

CT CAN End Homelessness requests **\$50 million**, of which **\$5 million annually** is requested to fund the Cold Weather Emergency Response Program.

The Benefits

- ⇒ Funds a critical component of the state's emergency response system.
- ⇒ Provides for a designated location in every community for safe sheltering during the winter and when a cold weather emergency as declared by the Governor.
- ⇒ Diverts those seeking shelter during extreme cold weather from emergency rooms and public buildings.
- ⇒ Keeps people safe, warm, and fed during a cold weather emergency.
- ⇒ Saves the lives of people who might otherwise die on the streets.

Contact Us: CEO Evonne Klein at eklein@cceh.org and COO Sarah Fox at sfox@cceh.org

