

Stabilize and Strengthen the Homeless Response System

Connecticut has seen a 14% rise¹ in homelessness year over year since 2021 and is experiencing the highest reported unsheltered² crisis in recent history. Homelessness in the state has been declared a public health crisis, but the Homeless Response System tasked with solving that crisis has not been provided consistent or adequate resources to achieve this goal.

The CT CAN End Homelessness initiative is asking the legislature to invest **\$20 Million to stabilize and strengthen Connecticut's Homeless Response System**. With this ongoing investment, we can ensure that homelessness is infrequent and short-term, saving lives and public dollars.

- 1. Annualize Cold Weather Emergency Response Program Funding.** Winter comes every year. As of January, over 800 people were sleeping outside in places unfit for human habitation. To keep people from freezing outside, Connecticut must invest:
\$5 Million to be added annually to the DOH Housing/Homeless Services line item
- 2. Strengthen shelter and outreach capacity:** Organizations are unable to hire and retain life-saving staff. 82% of our homeless response system employees cannot afford a one-bedroom apartment.³ To have a functioning emergency response system and give homeless and housing service organizations funding for necessary staffing and operational costs, Connecticut must invest:
\$6 Million to be added annually to the DOH Housing/Homeless Services line item
\$1.4 Million to be added annually to the DMHAS Homeless and Housing Support line
- 3. Increase and annualize funding for Diversion and CAN Hubs.** Diversion is one of the most cost-effective methods to prevent homelessness. The system lost more than 57 full-time positions responsible for this work due to the Emergency Solutions Grant-CARES Act (ESG-CV) funding cliff in 2023, and current funding is temporary. To continue to increase diversion rates and for CAN hubs to connect people with critical support and resources to resolve their housing crisis, Connecticut must invest:
\$3.6 Million to be added annually to the DOH Housing/Homeless Services line item
- 4. Increase and annualize funding for the Coordinated Access Network (CAN) Backbone Agencies.** CANs are the critical agencies that lead the emergency Homeless Response System and effectively organize the system of care but are primarily funded with one-time or temporary resources. To prevent system interruptions and maximize performance Connecticut must invest:
\$2 Million to be added annually to the DOH Housing/Homeless Services line item
- 5. Annualize Flexible Funding Subsidy Pool.** This funding subsidizes housing and provides flexible assistance to help individuals, families, and youth overcome financial barriers. It includes \$150,000 to support housing arrangements so youth can remain in high school. Connecticut must invest:
\$2 Million to be added annually to the DOH Housing/Homeless Services line item

CT CAN END HOMELESSNESS 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



These investments are in addition to the preservation of crucial FY23 allocations that directly impact homelessness in CT, including:

Department of Housing:

- Housing/Homeless Services: \$86.2 M
- Housing/Homeless Services (Municipality): \$6.75K
- Homeless Youth: \$3.15 M

Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services:

- Housing Supports & Services: \$27.76 M

Department of Developmental Services:

- Housing Supports & Services: \$1.4M

Additional Initiatives

Codify the Connecticut Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH). Governor Lamont recently established⁴ an Interagency Council on Homelessness responsible for collaborating on a multi-agency approach to strengthen homelessness prevention and response efforts. CT CAN End Homelessness is seeking to establish the permanency of the Interagency Council on Homelessness in state statute and to ensure that national best practices are followed, including people who are currently or formerly unhoused, service providers, partners, and advocates as part of the decision-making process alongside state agency leadership.

Give Unaccompanied Minors Access to Medical and Dental Care. This waiver will allow minors who are homeless under federal law to access medical and dental care to improve health outcomes for youth in Connecticut. This simple measure promotes the development of positive health habits and maintenance of physical and emotional health for minors, allows medical providers to monitor high-risk activities and identify early signs of long-term illnesses that emerge in adolescence, and reduces the invisibility of minors experiencing homelessness.

1. - Point-in-Time Count (PIT) in Connecticut, 2021-2023
2. - Coordinated Access Network Smartsheet Data: https://cceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FINAL-Weekly-Dashboard_-Unsheltered-Homelessness-in-CT-1.15.204.pdf
3. - NLIHC "Out of Reach" Report / CT Department of Housing Wage Data: <https://nlihc.org/oor/state/ct>
4. - Formation of the Connecticut Interagency Council on Homelessness: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2024/01-2024/Governor-Lamont-Announces-Formation-of-the-Connecticut-Interagency-Council-on-Homelessness>



The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) developed the CT CAN End Homelessness Legislative Agenda. Our Legislative Agenda reflects the input received from homeless response providers, front-line staff, agency partners, and people with lived experience of homelessness from across the state. Together, we envision a Connecticut where everyone, no matter their race, income, or background, can live in dignity and peace with a place to call their home.

