



## Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation

### Testimony Governor's Proposed Deficit Mitigation Plan

#### How/Why We Started:

Since 1981, after a priest at the Immaculate Conception Church discovered a homeless man frozen to death near the church steps, Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation has been a life saving resource to thousands of homeless individuals.

#### Who we serve/Our Mission:

Immaculate focuses on individuals most vulnerable to life on the streets of Hartford, including people with HIV/AIDS, homeless veterans and those with severe substance abuse/ mental health issues. The mission of the organization illuminates the work: "Because housing is a human right, Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation will provide housing and decent shelter with unconditional love to those without other options."

#### What We Offer:

Immaculate Conception Shelter & Housing Corporation offers shelter, food, clothing, medical and mental health care, case management, drug counseling, entitlement assistance, education and housing services.

Immaculate's programs include an emergency shelter, scattered site supportive housing, street outreach, summer respite, and we also have an education & employment component.

#### The Need:

Immaculate's Emergency Shelter runs from mid-October through mid-May. We generally serve 80 men each night, though on cold evenings with the streets covered in snow and ice, we've served as many as 100 men, cutting into our budgets. It is our mission to serve those who need it most and rarely turn people away. At a time when so many need shelter, we can't afford any more cuts to our budget.

This year, recognizing that the economic climate has yet to turn around, the City of Hartford requested that Immaculate participate in the City's "No Freeze" shelter in two ways. First, by adding 20 beds in our current location on the corner of Park and Hungerford. Second, by running a "No Freeze" shelter at an alternate location, serving an additional 40 of Hartford's homeless men, in much need of a warm meal and a safe place to sleep, away from the bitter New England cold. Running an alternate site will require doubles of everything, and more money. We can't afford any more cuts to our budget considering the City of Hartford needs us to serve Hartford's homeless.

Years ago, Immaculate's doors closed during the summer months. In recent years, as the economy began going down hill, we would open from May to October on a much smaller scale, to only 30-40 individuals, to those most vulnerable to life on the streets during the extreme summer months. These individuals usually are men with documented HIV/AIDS, those with severe mental or physical challenges and those over 60 years old. Our shelter protects them from summer's intense heat, dehydration, insect bites, and daily harassment. Without it, some risk physical abuse or having their make-shift shelter destroyed.

As with the "No Freeze," in response to the economic climate, Immaculate decided that they couldn't turn Hartford's neediest individuals away during the summer months and increased the program to serve 60 people. It will be impossible to honor our mission and run the Summer Respite program again if funding gets cut.

#### In Conclusion:

In conclusion, we simply cannot adequately and respectfully serve Hartford's neediest if funding gets cut. Precious lives are at stake.