

LISC

*Helping neighbors
build communities*

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION
HARTFORD & CONNECTICUT STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

March 11, 2010

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, Committee Members:

My name is Luisa Peschiera-Odell, and I am with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). LISC has been active in Connecticut for 25 years, promoting neighborhood revitalization and affordable housing statewide.

Today, we would like to address you regarding a vital resource for affordable housing: the **Community Investment Act**. Governor Rell's deficit mitigation plan to divert the resources of this dedicated fund into the General Fund undermines outstanding progress that has been made over the past three years in helping urban and rural communities to address their affordable housing needs.

Over the last three years, LISC along with the Connecticut Housing Coalition, has operated Housing Connections, a program to provide technical assistance to rural and suburban communities. This program is funded by an annual contract from CHFA. During this period, the program has supported the development of 388 homes in 17 communities in Connecticut. They are places like: North Haven, Old Saybrook, Franklin, Kent, Sharon and Litchfield. Some of these communities are developing affordable housing for the first time.

The attached flyer shows a map of where we work, and the details of results, but let me highlight a few:

- 17 organizations have identified sites for development.
- 8 are assembling financing commitments.
- 2 developments have completed construction.

As I mentioned earlier, this work will yield 388 homes. That is:

- 236 family and 152 elderly homes
- 56 homeownership and 332 rental units
- Serving approximately 1,000 low and moderate income residents of Connecticut.

LISC and the Coalition have been able to produce these results with active outreach, one-on-one technical assistance, educational forums, and planning and technical assistance grants. Since the project's inception, LISC has also invested \$1.4 million in grants and loans to support development in rural and suburban towns. LISC's investment is projected to leverage an additional \$15.2 in public and private funds for this purpose, infusing a total of \$16.6 million into Connecticut's economy.

By supporting the development of more affordable housing options, the Community Investment Act funds help Connecticut to meet several goals:

- Residents can choose to locate in towns that may have greater access to quality jobs and/or economic opportunities.
- Generations of families have the option to stay in their communities; enabling young people and elderly to stay connected to their families and communities.
- Local employers and municipalities can have a local labor force with stronger ties to the community.
- Engaging local residents in the creation of this housing produces local support for appropriate types of housing in the community; integrating open space, transportation, services and local design concepts into the housing.

We believe that this program, supported by the Community Investment Act, has the direct result of creating economic opportunity and strengthening quality of life for Connecticut residents. The elimination of these resources at this time threatens a very important support for affordable housing. There are currently no other state funds that support such technical assistance. The demand for this assistance is evidenced by the number of towns that have responded so readily to the offer of help.

We ask that the committee protect these important resources by preserving the funds of the Community Investment Act.

We thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. We would be happy to provide you any additional information that you may need.

HOUSING CONNECTIONS

of connecticut

A network of opportunities for community developers

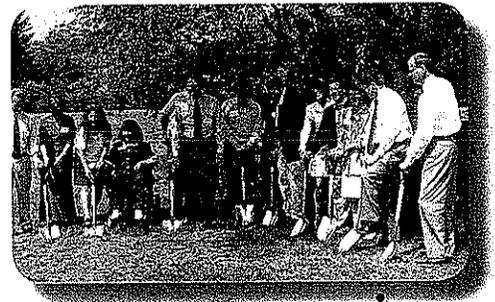


Made possible by support from the Community Investment Act



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Housing Connections of Connecticut works in Connecticut's suburban and rural towns, helping local residents to address the affordable housing needs of their communities. Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Connecticut Housing Coalition offer technical assistance with planning, site selection, design, financing, development and management of affordable housing. This program has been supported since 2007 by a contract from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA).



Housing Connections works with a variety of local partners including non-profits, community organizations, local governments, housing authorities and small for-profit developers. Here are some highlights:



- From Greenwich to Killingly, Salisbury to Stonington, Housing Connections has provided services to nearly one-third of the 151 eligible towns in the state.
- 4 communities have formed or strengthened local housing organizations.
- 6 communities completed housing plans or needs assessments.
- 17 organizations have identified sites for development.
- 8 are assembling financing commitments.
- 2 developments have completed construction.
- The Housing Connections portfolio includes 388 affordable homes in 19 communities with 13 organizations.
 - 236 family and 152 elderly homes
 - 56 homeownership and 332 rental units
 - 241 new construction and 147 with rehabilitation of existing structures

