



Written Testimony to the State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee regarding the Report of the Interagency Council on Affordable Housing

January 28, 2013

The Corporation for Supportive Housing respectfully submits the below testimony to the State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee in support of the recommendations presented in the Report of the Interagency Council on Affordable Housing regarding the Department of Housing. Specifically, CSH applauds the Council in the following recommendations:

- The inclusion of ending homelessness as a priority and in the mission statement of the department;
- The recommendation to establish a both Supportive Housing Director position and a Research and Innovation position within the new Department; and
- The aligning of resources, particularly the State Rental Assistance Program vouchers into the Department of Housing.

These recommendations are tremendous step in reducing barriers to housing for vulnerable individuals and families in CT. We applaud the Council in its attempt to both expand access to affordable housing as well as to align funding streams to facilitate the development of affordable housing in CT.

As you know, Connecticut is a national leader in supportive housing. With more than 4,000 units of supportive housing in CT, we have the kind of public investment and interagency collaboration that is the envy of other states. However, there is still much work to be done in ending homelessness. By including a supportive housing position in the Housing Department, CT is solidifying its commitment to supportive housing as a solution to end homelessness and meeting the needs of some of CT's most vulnerable individuals. It is only through this type of commitment that we can ensure that CT will continue to develop the amount of supportive housing needed to get the job of ending homelessness done.

Supportive housing requires interagency collaboration. It is developed through the strategic combination of capital, operating and services funding. The Supportive Housing Director will serve as a boundary spanner between the multiple systems, financing, subsidy and services that need to work together in order to maintain a supportive housing pipeline to meet demand in CT. By solidifying this position in the new department, Connecticut will reduce overlap, reduce costs while maximizing impact. The Director will facilitate a shared vision and priorities between agencies (populations, housing types, service models); be able to ensure that specific resources are committed to achieve priorities; coordinate programs and resources (federal, state, local, bonds, grants, subsidies, etc) related to SH; and ensure access to housing for most vulnerable and poorest populations.

Furthermore, by including a position within the Department to oversee research and innovation, the Department will ensure the most effective utilization of current resources as well as open opportunities to access federal and philanthropic resources to advance the work and mission of the Department. The role of this position will be to work with the Commissioner, the Interagency Committee and other stakeholders in order to define data and research needs, establish and monitor progress of measurable goals and outcomes for the Department, encourage and support innovation and the implementation and