

Written Testimony, February 11, 2014  
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Good Evening. My name is Nicole Barnofski and I am the Family Stabilization Manager for New Haven Home Recovery, Inc (NHHR). NHHR provides emergency shelter, supportive housing, family stabilization and furniture to over 2,400 men, women and children annually. Further, our organization has been providing Rapid Re-housing services for over seven years and this is what I would like to talk about today.

First and foremost I have come here to thank you all and the governor for your continued efforts in these housing solutions. The Governor's budget provides \$1 million for RAP certificates and **\$650,000 for rapid rehousing initiatives** in the Department of Housing through carry forward funding from FY 2014. I am here to advocate sustaining and continuing our State's path to provide these necessary resources in order to carry out these interventions that are working!

Rapid Re-housing provides households with short term financial assistance that rapidly places a family in shelter back into permanent housing. These are households that don't meet the definition of chronically homeless or are eligible for other interventions that include Supportive Housing Services. These are typically households who are experiencing homelessness for the first time due to limited income, lack of social supports and underemployment and/or unemployment. Many of our families are only able to obtain part time employment and are faced with constantly fluctuating hours. By rapidly exiting families from shelter they are able to focus on the stabilization of the home and work on the areas that are contributing factors to homelessness (income, employment, childcare etc). Since 2009 NHHR has seen the length of stay at our organizations shelter's decrease from an average of 78 days for a household down to an average of 55 days in FY 13. We believe this decrease can be attributed to the State's stronger implementation of Rapid re-housing services since 2009.

The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) has been closely monitoring the outcomes of the National Recovery and Reinvestment Act's Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) services provided in Connecticut since 2009 through the state's homeless management and information system (HMIS). Three years after providing rapid re-housing services 82% of singles and 95% of families served through this intervention have not returned back to shelter (CCEH Homelessness in Connecticut January 2014 fact sheet).

From March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013 NHHR's Region 2 Connecticut Rapid Re-housing team, a program funded from the Department of Housing, was able to rapidly re-house a total of 73 households. NHHR was able to place families back into permanent housing in an average of 28 days, during this period, from the date of intake into the program. This year starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to date our region has already housed over

20 families. At this rate NHHR could almost double the number of households served as compared to last year. A household served with these dollars averages around \$2,200 to \$2,500 per household which provides security deposit assistance and first month's rent. A barrier and challenge for us in being able to do so is the limited financial resources available within the state of Connecticut. Through the budget provisions from the Governor's budget we believe this will assist us and other Rapid Re-housing providers to continue on this path and impact more families! The Department of Housing and agencies across the state have already implemented the structures necessary to provide these services which will allow these State's dollars to be maximized with the focus of providing financial assistance. In the long term Rapid re-housing assistance will continue to work towards decreasing the need for shelter stay, provide short term services that will support housing sustainability and prevent the return to shelter. All which will in the long term decrease the amount of resources needed from the state to end homelessness.

According to HUD (<https://www.onecpd.info/news/snaps-weekly-focus-rapid-re-housing/>), rapid rehousing programs have the social and financial benefit to the State of:

- Reducing the known negative impacts of prolonged homelessness, including loss of employment, increased substance use, failure to adhere to medical/mental health care, school tardiness/absenteeism/performance and graduation rates
- Reducing the length of stay in shelter results in freeing up beds for people who need them and enables the community to maintain their basic safety net
- For the majority of homeless families, short term assistance helps secure permanent housing quickly and successfully,
- And in CT, as well as other areas of the country, decreases likeliness of returning to shelter

In closing I would like to thank the committee for their time today and again for the continued support towards increasing our State's Rapid Re-housing resources. I will be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.