



THAMES VALLEY COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.
Serving Our Communities Since 1965

Deborah Monahan, Executive Director

**February 27, 2014 Public Hearing Submitted Testimony before the
Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Governor's Budget Bill

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Deborah Monahan and I am the Executive Director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc., the community action agency serving Southeastern Connecticut. **I would like to voice my strong opposition to the elimination of the Human Services Infrastructure (HSI) Community Action Program line from the Department of Social Services budget.**

As you know, Connecticut's Community Action Network provides basic services such as food, shelter, heating assistance, and child care to the state's low and moderate income communities. We provide these services utilizing a multigenerational, customer-focused, integrated service delivery system called the Human Services Infrastructure (HSI). HSI is an open-communication network of our staff that assists people in need with finding and obtaining all the available resources to become self-sufficient. **The elimination of the HSI funds, the "core" funding for Community Action Agencies (CAAs), will severely impact our ability to help Connecticut's families when they need us most.**

Eliminating **\$3.4 million** of HSI funds will actually mean a **direct cut of almost \$5 million** in services to low-income families, since these funds are used as a match for federal funds.

Specifically for TVCCA, the elimination of the HSI funding will mean:

- Seven (7) invaluable case managers will lose their jobs. They are the lifeline for the most vulnerable people across Southeastern CT.
- Returning to program silos. Customer-focused, integrated service delivery will be gone and fragmented services will become the new reality for people already struggling. Our current ability to efficiently assess and holistically serve someone in crisis will be drastically damaged. People will not be helped quickly, resulting in longer unemployment, poorer health care outcomes, and longer stays in homeless shelters.
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance services will be lost, as well as the subsequent funds to be reinvested in the local economy. In 2014, TVCCA served 677 individuals/families with tax return completion and filing. This resulted in refunds that infused almost \$1.5 million into the community.



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- A significant loss of funds matching. Our HSI system at TVCCA has also leveraged thousands of private foundation dollars that assist clients in their crises when other resources are not available: e.g. car repair; co-pays for prescriptions, purchases of basic need and other necessities not covered by other assistance. We are successful in leveraging thousands that assist our clients and prevent further spiraling out of control. This will be devastated by the loss of HSI monies.

Cutting HSI funds, “core” funding for CAAs, will severely impair the ability of Connecticut’s low income families to move toward and achieve self-sufficiency.

Although it has been over six years since the economic recession hit, TVCCA continues to see an increase in requests for assistance from the **working poor who continue to struggle with basic needs expenses while working one, two and in some cases three part time jobs.** We are seeing people who have never asked for assistance before and who are still feeling the impact of the Great Recession.

In this, the richest state in the country, eliminating HSI funding will deliver a severe blow to our most vulnerable residents – your constituents - and to the communities in which they live!

Please restore the HSI CAP funding. It is the basic needs safety net across Connecticut.

I would like to thank you for understanding the importance of supporting the work our state’s Community Action Agencies do each and every day for Connecticut’s families. As a network we are deeply committed to empowering people and building communities, and these efforts have never been more necessary than now.

Sincerely,

Deborah Monahan
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