



Testimony for Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
March 2nd, 2015 Hearing on Conservation and Development

Re: Department of Housing

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The State and local governments feel the impact of homelessness and housing instability directly in their budgets, by paying for increasingly expensive costs that could have been avoided: Medicaid, behavioral health, and uncompensated care funding for inpatient and acute health services; foster care placements; school transportation; recidivism through jails and courts; and subsidies for shelters and specialized homeless services. Unless interrupted, the multi-generational cycle of housing instability continues to take its toll in human and financial terms, as homeless children become homeless adults.

On behalf of Supportive Housing WORKS (SHW) we are writing to support the strategic investments Governor Malloy is proposing in his FY 2016 – FY 2017 budget that makes economic sense for the people of Connecticut. As a nonprofit working to end homelessness in Fairfield County, we applaud the Administration in focusing on ways to relieve cost in areas of our public systems. For example, by investing in 200 new units of scattered site supportive housing to serve those who frequently cycle through the criminal justice and homeless systems, millions of public dollars can be saved by averting the expensive cycling through hospitals, corrections and other public systems. Data reported in 2012 have demonstrated that CT can save as much as \$30,000 per person served by providing appropriate housing to people experiencing homelessness and who have high medical needs. Furthermore continued support of rapid re-housing (housing location and modest, time-limited financial assistance) provides a cost effective solution to averting long term homelessness making new episodes for households brief, rare and non-recurring.

We have witnessed first-hand how these resources are having a dramatic impact on our homeless rate in the Greater Bridgeport region where we experienced a 41% decrease in chronic homelessness over a two year period. As a region, we are collaborative more than ever before to stretch and leverage our limited resources to finish the job of ending homelessness.

To conclude, homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy problem. Investments proposed in the Governor's budget for permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing and support services will save public resources and help families and individuals transition to housing, stability and hope. Please contact me with any questions or for further information at 203.579.3180.

Respectfully,

David Rich

David Rich
Executive Director

