



Testimony Submitted in Support of
Restoring the Funding to The Governor's Prevention Partnership

With 80 branches across the state and 750 employees in Connecticut, First Niagara made a major splash in the banking world, along with the local philanthropic community when we entered the Connecticut market in 2011 through the acquisition of NewAlliance Bank.

We are here today to support one of our premierecommunity partners: The Governor's Prevention Partnership as they face major cuts to their state funding. As a public-private partnership, we, as a private funding partner, are motivated to give for many reasons, notwithstanding the ability of our dollars to be leveraged against state support, essentially increasing the magnitude of the impact of our contribution.

Do Great Things

First Niagara has invested nearly \$350,000 towards mentoring efforts in Connecticut since 2011. We estimate that this contribution has had an impact worth more than \$700,000. With our initial two years of commitment, we were able to reduce the mentoring gap in the State was reduced by 5 percent. Our dollars have also supported the launch of the Connecticut Mentoring Fund, male recruitment initiatives, outreach to Latino families, pass through dollars to start a mentoring program in Manchester, and outreach efforts to youth with incarcerated parents.

First Niagara's partnership with The Governor's Partnership is a strategic decision. Through their reach to more than 150 mentoring organizations in Connecticut, our investment is leveraged to have a greater impact throughout the state, compared to a decision to support discreet programs in different municipalities. First Niagara was named a member of the 25th Anniversary Governor's Cabinet in 2014, a distinction held for businesses that have donated more than \$250,000 to support the mission.

One of The Governor's Prevention Partnership's core areas is promoting mentoring across the state. First Niagara believes in the benefits of mentoring – whether it be in the form of financial, programmatic or individual support. When First Niagara made the decision to be more disciplined and focused about our philanthropic efforts, it was determined that within the context of our corporate culture, and needs of the communities in which we operate, support for mentoring was a good match.

Through well-run mentoring programs, there is an ability to impact at-risk youth and provide them with the relationships and resources necessary to achieve and maintain good grades, stay away from negative influences, and pursue higher education opportunities. Moreover, these programs have a direct and positive impact not only on the children, but the cities and towns where First Niagara operates, our customers, and Connecticut's future workforce.

The Governor's Prevention Partnership has twenty-six years of experience working with schools, law enforcement, parents, youth serving organizations, government and businesses to keep Connecticut's kids safe success and drug-free today for a stronger workforce tomorrow. First Niagara is proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with The Governor's Prevention Partnership and ask you to consider the devastating impact a reduction in funding will have on the youth of Connecticut.