

# JOURNEY HOME



**Testimony for Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly  
March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 Hearing on Conservation and Development  
By Matthew Morgan, Executive Director  
Journey Home**

**Re: Department of Housing**

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

Journey Home partners with the region's social service providers, to focus on *solving* the problem of chronic homelessness with housing, employment, and support services, rather than *managing* it with emergency shelter. As a catalyst for systemic change, Journey Home develops and implements innovative ways to improve the housing and service system, in order to offer those experiencing homelessness paths toward independent, fulfilling, and productive lives. Journey Home leads the Coordinated Access Network which seeks to improve access to shelter and housing in Greater Hartford. Journey Home leads the implementation of *Opening Doors: Greater Hartford*, the community plan to end homelessness, aligned with the *Opening Doors: Connecticut* and federal plans to end homelessness.

When making difficult decisions regarding the state budget, priorities must be made which requires determining what is the most critical, what is the most essential, what is the most cost-saving, what will have the biggest impact, and what is the most immediate need. People experiencing homelessness are usually the poorest, the most vulnerable, and the most costly groups of people in our society. We are close to becoming one of the first states in the country to end veteran homelessness by the end of this year, and chronic homelessness by the end of 2016. We can only do this if our legislature upholds Governor Malloy's proposed budget items for additional supportive housing and rapid rehousing, and maintains housing and homeless service funding from previous years. Imagine the cost savings from healthcare, incarceration, police, shelter, and courts if we no longer have the frequent users of these systems accumulating enormous costs. Imagine being able to attract new business investment, young talent, and families with children to our State because it is a safer and a more attractive place to live and to do business. Imagine becoming known nationally and internationally as the first state to eradicate homelessness. Imagine being able to say that we no longer have the blight of homelessness on our consciences. Ending chronic and veteran homelessness is the most critical, the most essential, will serve the most vulnerable, the most in need, and make the biggest impact on our State. It is time for Connecticut to make history, and we are going to do so, but only if you support this budget to help finish the job of ending veteran and chronic homelessness!

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Matthew Morgan, Executive Director