

# JOURNEY HOME



**Governor's Proposed Budget FY16-FY17  
Appropriations Hearing, Conservation and Development  
Department of Housing  
Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

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

- We recognize that Connecticut faces a difficult budget climate and that hard choices must be made.
- Ending homelessness is the right thing to do for Connecticut residents in urgent need, and the smart thing to do for our state. When homelessness persists, our public systems – including emergency services, hospitals, jails, and schools – incur heavy costs, without resolving the homelessness of those cycling in and out of these public systems.
- We are making significant progress towards our goal of ending homelessness in Connecticut, through the unprecedented support of Governor Malloy, the legislature, and the Departments of Housing and Mental Health and Addiction Services.
  - Connecticut became the first state in the nation recognized by the federal government for ending chronic homelessness among Veterans in 2015.
  - Connecticut is on track in the *Zero: 2016* Campaign to end chronic homelessness (the long-term homelessness of people with severe disabilities) by the end of this year.
  - The 2015 Point-in-Time (PIT) count (annual census of homelessness) showed the lowest number of homeless counted in CT since the first count in 2007
  - Unsheltered homelessness was down 32% since 2013 PIT count.
  - Chronic homelessness decreased by 21% from the 2014 PIT count.
- We are making great strides toward ending all forms of homelessness in Connecticut, improving the lives of those who have experienced homelessness and improving our communities that have struggled with this issue.
- With the support of the Governor and the legislature, we are building a comprehensive and coordinated response system to end homelessness. Cuts to the resources available for this effort now would risk reversing the important progress we are making across the state.
- In order to maintain this positive momentum, we ask for your support for continued investment in effective solutions.

- **Expand Permanent Supportive Housing for High Need and Chronic Homelessness:** Permanent Supportive Housing (affordable housing with supportive services) continues to be the most effective housing model to assist people with high needs and those experiencing chronic homelessness and is proven to cut system costs by up to 70%.
- We support the Reaching Home Campaigns proposal for **\$1.5 million for rental subsidies and \$1.125 million for services in FY 17 to reach the goal of ending chronic homelessness in Connecticut.**
- **Support Coordinated Access to Homeless Resources-** Connecticut's eight Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) of providers are working together across the state as teams to serve those in need more effectively from emergency shelter through the full range of housing options. This important system change is yielding real results, but requires dedicated support to realize its full potential to serve those in urgent need and make the most effective use of available resources to end homelessness.
  - We support the Reaching Home Campaigns proposal for the allocation of **\$747,00 in FY 2017 for additional funds to support Coordinated Access Network (CAN) coordination during this critical start-up phase.**
- **Provide Immediate Assistance for Homeless Youth in Crisis-** Great strides have been made in advancing the Opening Doors for Youth Plan, including the completion of a homeless youth count which estimated 3,000 homeless/housing unstable youth in our state. We need immediate options to support vulnerable youth facing homelessness in our state.
  - We support the Reaching Home Campaigns proposal for \$2 million in FY 2017 for crisis response and housing supports to plug critical gaps in the housing continuum for youth and young adults.
- **Expand Rapid Re-Housing:** Rapid re-housing (housing location and short-term housing subsidy) is a cost effective way to help many singles and families exit homelessness quickly and permanently – over 80% of single adults, 90% of families did not return to homelessness three years after rapid re-housing assistance. Building adequate capacity for Rapid Re-Housing efforts is central to laying the foundation for success of Coordinated Access, which depends on the exit of clients to housing so that emergency shelter space can be made available for new clients in urgent need.
  - We support the Reaching Home Campaigns proposal for the allocation of \$2 million in FY 2017 for Rapid Re-Housing.
- The impact on the lives of individuals and families in Greater Hartford has been amazing. In less than a year, we have seen chronically homeless individuals who were homeless for many years get housed, stabilize their lives, and become inspiring

examples to our community of how housing can transform someone's path. We have had individuals start new careers in a variety of fields like Sal, who was able to get seasonal work as a Wal-Mart. One of our best examples is Joe, who was chronically homeless for years and sleeping in a tent by the Connecticut River, and who then was rapidly rehoused last year with Community Health Resources. After he was housed, he received a college scholarship in engineering, completed a program at Goodwin College, now has a full-time job in the aerospace industry, and on top of it all, he is now also going to school part-time for even more education to continue to move up in his career.

- Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy problem. Investments in permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, and support services save public resources and help families and individuals transition to housing, stability, and hope.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew Morgan", is written over a light yellow rectangular highlight.

Matthew Morgan  
Executive Director  
Journey Home