



Testimony for Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly  
February 10th, 2016 Hearing on Conservation and Development

**Re: Department of Housing**

Dear 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.

At Supportive Housing WORKS (SHW) we are proud of the significant impact we have made in our mission to end homelessness in Fairfield County that is attributed to the unprecedented support of Governor Malloy, the legislature, and the Departments of Housing and Mental Health and Addiction Services. Through our work and that of our partner, we are on track in the Zero: 2016 Campaign to end homelessness by the end of this year. Our ability to succeed is in part attributed to building a comprehensive and coordinated response system to end homelessness which changed the paradigm of managing homelessness to actually ending it. Cuts to the resources available for this effort now would risk reversing the important progress we are making in Fairfield County. To that end, we support the **Reaching Home Campaign's proposal for the allocation of \$747,000 in FY 2017 for additional funds to support Coordinated Access Network (CAN) coordination.**

Also, in the Fairfield County area, we have the grim reality of the extent of youth homelessness as a result of a youth count. In just one Bridgeport High School where 492 surveys were administered, 102 housing unstable youth were counted. We need immediate options to support vulnerable youth and so we support the **Reaching Home Campaign's 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.**

Finally, rapid rehousing has proven to be a cost effective way to help many Fairfield County households to exit homelessness quickly and permanently. Building adequate capacity for Rapid rehousing is key to the success of the Fairfield County's CAN ability to exit families and individuals to housing. We therefore support the **Reaching Home Campaign's proposal for the allocation of \$2 million in FY 2017 for Rapid Re-Housing.**

To conclude, homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy problem. Investments proposed in the Governor's budget will save public resources while bringing the state closer to eradicating homelessness. Please contact me with any questions or for further information.

Respectfully,

*David Rich*

David Rich  
Executive Director