

We Can End Homelessness!

Homelessness is an unacceptable and expensive problem: it takes too great a toll on human lives and creates heavy costs our public systems (emergency services, jails, schools, hospitals) cannot afford to bear. We can end homelessness in Connecticut – and we are making progress. Let's maintain the momentum by investing in solutions!

Victories to Date

- ☑ CT recognized in 2015 by the federal government as the first state to end chronic homelessness (long-term homelessness of people with disabilities) among veterans.
- ☑ CT is on track to end all chronic homelessness – saving the state dollars and saving lives
- ☑ The 2015 Point-in-Time (PIT) count (annual census of homelessness) showed:
 - Lowest number of homeless counted in CT since first count in 2007
 - Unsheltered homelessness down 32% since 2013 PIT count
 - Great progress toward ending veteran homelessness: only 80 veterans counted in emergency shelters
 - Chronic homelessness decreased by 21% from the 2014 PIT count

Recommendations:

Expand Permanent Supportive Housing for High Need and Chronic Homelessness

Permanent Supportive Housing (affordable housing + 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%. Connecticut's significant investment in supportive housing over nearly 20 years and a concerted push to serve this population have yielded results: the Reaching Home goal of ending chronic homelessness is within reach. There is currently an estimated gap of 150 units of permanent supportive housing to meet this goal. In addition, data indicates that about 900 units of permanent supportive housing will be needed to serve individuals at risk of entering chronic homelessness over the next several years. A flexible source of rental subsidy and services funds would allow us to leverage the creation of supportive housing in much of the rental housing produced in Connecticut – including new state-financed affordable housing initiatives, redeveloped state public housing, and privately funded developments. Reaching Home is requesting new, flexible funding for an additional 150 units of permanent supportive housing to end chronic homelessness by the end of 2016, and a plan to create 500 additional units through 2018 to house the high-need population of people experiencing homelessness and prevent future chronic homelessness.

- **Reaching Home recommends \$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.**

Develop a Medicaid Option for Supportive Housing Services

Medicaid funds can support expansion and sustainability of supportive housing services for the highest cost and most vulnerable subset of homeless individuals, reducing costs to health care and public services such as inpatient hospitalizations, emergency room utilization and incarceration in correctional facilities by these individuals.

- **Reaching Home proposes the creation of a new services funding mechanism through Medicaid for supportive housing targeted to high utilizers of health care.**

Reaching Home is Opening Doors...

...to a Future where *Everyone* has a home

Support Coordinated Access to Homeless Resources

Coordinating Access to homeless system resources is a best practice and required by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development because it is proven to accelerate efforts to end all forms of homelessness. 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.

- **Reaching Home proposes the allocation of \$747,000 in FY 2017 for additional funds to support Coordinated Access Network (CAN) coordination during this critical start-up phase.**

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.

- **Reaching Home proposes \$2 million in FY 2017 for Rapid Re-Housing.**

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. An integral component of the Youth Plan calls for expanding direct services and support along the housing continuum, including the creation of more youth and young adult (YYA)-specific respite beds, crisis response services, and the creation of age appropriate, time limited housing support services for YYA ages 16-24 who need initial assistance in securing and maintaining housing and basic needs. We need immediate options to support vulnerable youth facing homelessness in our state.

- **Reaching Home requests \$2 million in FY 2017 for crisis response and housing supports to plug critical gaps in the housing continuum for youth and young adults.**

About Reaching Home

Reaching Home is the campaign to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. With more than 200 participating organizations representing a variety of sectors, Reaching Home works to develop public policies, community support and resources that will bring an end to homelessness in Connecticut. Reaching Home also implements *Opening Doors-CT*, the statewide framework for ending homelessness in Connecticut.

Homelessness is unacceptable. Homelessness is solvable and preventable.
Homelessness is expensive. Invest in solutions.