



PARTNERSHIP Ending homelessness.
FOR STRONG Expanding affordable housing.
COMMUNITIES Strengthening Connecticut's communities.

2019 Legislative Agenda

Homelessness is Expensive. Invest in Solutions.

The Partnership envisions a state with strong, vibrant communities where all people can find safe, affordable homes with access to opportunities, and where being without a home, even briefly, is the rare exception. Every day, we strive to:

Prevent and end homelessness. Ensure the key housing and homelessness resources necessary to maintain the state's progress on ending homelessness. The statewide homelessness efforts have saved money and conserved resources, resulting in an end to veterans' homelessness, a near-elimination of chronic homelessness and new strategies to end family and youth homelessness. CT has seen a 25% reduction in homelessness since 2007, but far too many individuals and families still experience homelessness in our state.

Expand Housing Affordability. Reduce housing instability by creating a greater supply of homes that residents can afford – lowering their housing costs and increasing income available for food, clothing, healthcare, childcare and other vital needs. More than 200,000 CT households spend more than 50% of their income on their housing costs. Those with the lowest incomes risk falling into homelessness, threatening their lives and requiring costly services.

Legislative Priorities

Restore Housing Support Services for High Need Populations – restoring \$1.4M at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) will bring the allocation back to \$24.2M

Supportive housing continues to be the most effective model to assist people with disabilities and chronic health conditions exit homelessness and is proven to cut public system cost by up to 70%.¹ We must maintain the necessary housing stabilization support and wraparound services that keep highly vulnerable people stable in their housing. These funds should be restored to FY2017 levels (\$24.2 million) at the DMHAS. Funding rescissions have led to a gap in the service system that is being felt across the state. The restoration will serve approximately 189 individuals. There are many Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) units and Public Housing Authority (PHA) units that do not have the necessary supportive housing services.

Preserve the Housing/Homelessness Resources at the Department of Housing – Housing and Homeless Line Item (\$78.6M), Homeless Youth Line Item (\$2.3M), and Community Investment Account (CIA) funds at DOH.

Continued investment in the state's rental assistance for supportive housing, housing assistance for youth experiencing homelessness, and the Coordinated Access Networks (CAN) system is critical to maintain our progress. Community Investment Account funds have been a key source of discretionary funding for ending homelessness and should be preserved. Preserving the homeless youth program that provides critical housing services for youth and young adults will provide greater access to crisis response services where there are geographic gaps, increase outreach and identification of homeless/housing unstable youth/young adults, and reduce safety risks such as sex trading, suicide, and dropping out of school.

Maintain support for Coordinated Access Networks – Add funding for Coordinated Access Network (CAN) infrastructure including the 2-1-1 housing unit to the Department of Housing's Housing/Homeless Services Line Item (\$1.55M)

Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) serve as the regional "front doors" to homeless services, streamline access to assistance, ensure that people are matched to appropriate interventions, and help to troubleshoot barriers to housing. 2-1-1 serves as the statewide single point of entry to the CANs. By organizing providers to coordinate and target housing

¹ UNC at Charlotte (2014), Moore place permanent supportive housing evaluation study year 1 report

resources, CANs ensure that those with the highest needs are prioritized for assistance and that public resources are used to achieve maximum impact and efficiency. The state's support to CANs has been through discretionary funding from the Community Investment Account (CIA) account over the past three years. Creating a line item for this funding in the Department of Housing's budget will ensure a stable, annualized source of support for the CANs and 2-1-1.

Expand Rapid Re-Housing Resources – \$2M at the Department of Housing

The success of the homeless system depends on the outflow of residents from emergency shelter to free up space for new households and ensure that more intensive interventions like permanent supportive housing and rental assistance are reserved for those with high service needs. Rapid Re-Housing assists many households to rapidly exit shelter and obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible. Since August of 2015, 93 percent of rapid rehousing participants have not returned to homelessness. There is a critical gap in Rapid Re-housing assistance, which increases lengths of stay of people in shelter and reduces shelter capacity overall. An additional \$2M for Rapid Re-Housing efforts will allow 900 more individuals to be re-housed.

Continue Strategic Capital Investments in Affordable Housing -- provide \$165M for the Affordable Housing FLEX Fund and \$40M for the state Housing Trust Fund, per year

Helping rent-burdened and homeless families to obtain permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible and ensuring that they have access to services that enable them to remain housed and become self-sufficient is critical to Connecticut's economic growth and child development. Affordable housing is a proven solution for achieving economic mobility, stability, and resolving homelessness amongst families. We must continue to make critical capital investments at the Department of Housing, in order to prevent and end all forms of homelessness and sustain the progress we're making in Connecticut.

Identify and Educate Students Experiencing Homelessness

CT should align its education statutes (Conn Gen Stat §§ 10-253, 10-186) with federal McKinney-Vento rights. Doing so will clarify the rights of students experiencing homelessness to immediately enroll in school, a critical component to preventing youth and family homelessness. Additionally, clarifying the process when a disagreement arises will help districts and students to implement a consistent, predictable path as described in federal law. These measures encourage a friendly atmosphere where students can remain schooled, while providing a safe zone for students to discuss their homeless status with their school. These provisions will add no additional financial burden to districts or the state, and already exist in federal law

Accelerate Housing Development Through Incentives

We support **creation of a new \$20 million capital grant program for developers and municipalities that zone for and create affordable housing.** The program would provide incentives, rewards, and technical assistance to encourage and empower developers and municipalities to plan and build the diverse housing stock that the state needs. Funding for capital projects would be available to developers and/or communities that have demonstrated a commitment to affordable housing creation as part of a new or already planned project. Funds could be used for infrastructure (sewer, roads, etc), acquisition costs or subsidies for affordable units. This program would award funds based on the project's connection with housing, the municipality's affordable housing production record, and use of sustainable growth policies. These designated municipalities also would be given priority access to other select discretionary grants (e.g. Urban Act, STEAP, DOT Grant Funds).

The Partnership staffs and manages the statewide Reaching Home Campaign to end homelessness and the HOMEConnecticut Campaign to expand affordable housing options in Connecticut

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