

**Appropriations Budget Hearing
On Governor's proposed Mid-term Budget Adjustments for FY2021
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Friday, February 21st, 2020**

Testimony Template Example

[Please use these talking points as a basis for your testimony and tailor accordingly]

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Lavielle, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today on the important investments through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to support efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Template Talking Points

- Connecticut continues to be a leader in the nation in efforts to address the important and expensive problem of homelessness.
- Investment in proven solutions to homelessness are necessary to continue our progress and ensure that every youth, family, and individual has a stable place to call home.
- Investments are working: numbers of those experiencing homelessness are going down year after year. Connecticut has seen a 66% reduction in chronic homelessness since 2016.
- New homelessness is happening every day. It is not a static problem - we still have far too many people in crisis and becoming homeless daily.
- We know what works - Connecticut was recognized in 2016 by the federal government as one of the first two states in the nation to end homelessness among Veterans.

2020 Legislative Priorities

We are supportive of the enacted budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Housing Supports and Services line at \$23 million.

In addition, there's a critical need for a new targeted investment of \$1 million at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Housing Supports and Services line to pair support services with the rental assistance and improve housing stability, income and employment, health and wellness issues, and enhance connections to community resources.

Providing enhanced outreach services at \$375,000 at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Housing Supports and Services line would enable us to better identify individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This capacity is extremely limited at present, leaving people outside and vulnerable to severe and unsafe conditions.

Additional Items to Consider Supporting

The Governor has also included an expansion of \$3 million in funding for community placements for individuals at Connecticut Valley Hospital to support those who are ready for discharge back into their communities.

Funding for these community-based options for housing and support services is critical for the state to prevent people from languishing in an institution or exiting the system and becoming chronically homeless. This investment is fundamental to our efforts to make homelessness rare, brief and one-time by 2023.

Closing Language Options

- Homelessness is a costly problem, in the toll it takes on human lives, and in consuming substantial public resources. We know what works to end homelessness – through coordinated efforts to secure the right housing and supports, we can resolve homelessness – one person, one family at a time. The net gain to those we serve, to our communities, and to our state is clear: it costs more to allow homelessness to persist than it does to resolve it.
- **PLEASE ADD POINTS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THESE PROGRAMS IN YOUR COMMUNITY, AND PLEASE SHARE ANY STORIES THAT YOU CAN WITH REGARD TO SPECIFIC, ANONYMOUS INDIVIDUALS.**
- Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy problem. We urge you to support the proposed investments in frontline homeless services, supportive housing, and support services that save public resources and help families and individuals transition to housing, stability, and hope.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and thank you for your support to efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

YOUR TITLE

YOUR AGENCY