

Legislative Priorities

1. Protect Vital Homeless System Resources:

- **DOH Housing/Homeless Services line currently at \$85.8M**
- **DOH Homeless Youth line currently at \$2.3M**
- **DMHAS Housing Supports and Services line currently at \$23M**

2. Stabilize Funding for the Coordinated Access Networks (CANs):

Specify Funding for Coordinated Access Networks and 2-1-1 at \$2.3M - The Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) provide streamlined access to the homeless services system at the regional level. 2-1-1 serves as the statewide single point of entry to the CANs. In recent years, CAN funding has been provided at the discretion of the Department of Housing from their Community Investment Account (CIA). The state should continue to support this critical network by **providing \$2.3 million annually to the Department of Housing's Housing/Homeless Services line.**

Reaching Home is the campaign to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. With more than 200 partners representing a variety of systems and sectors, Reaching Home is working to make homelessness in Connecticut rare, brief, and one-time by 2023.

3. Make New Targeted Investments in Key Housing and Services Lines to End this Crisis by 2023 that:

Stop Inflow

Targeted Funding for Housing Stabilization at DOH's Housing/Homeless Services Line at \$1.47M This funding will enhance our state's capacity to quickly resolve episodes of homelessness by decreasing the number of individuals and youth requiring shelter through the use of flexible funds for shelter diversion and rapid exit.

Stably House More Individuals and Families with Supportive Housing

Rental Assistance at \$1M at DOH's Housing/Homeless Services Line to provide adequate, safe, and stable housing for highly vulnerable people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Individualized services at \$1M at DMHAS' 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.

Identify All Unsheltered Individuals and Families

Enhance outreach services at \$375,000 at DMHAS' Housing Supports and Services Line to better identify individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

4. Continue New Capital Investments for the Development of Affordable Housing at the Department of Housing – Authorize additional bonding of \$100 million each year for the Affordable Housing FLEX Fund; and an additional \$50 million each year for the State Housing Trust Fund

Quick access to permanent, affordable housing is critical to stabilization of families, child development, and the economic growth of the state. In the next five years, 4,843 publicly supported rental homes in Connecticut are set to have their rent restrictions expire. At least 2,230 units of public housing are in need of immediate investment due to their poor condition.

5. Amend State Statutes to Remove Harmful Barriers for Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness to Access Identity Documents

Lack of access to identity documents including associated fees, such as birth certificates and state issued ID's, are a significant barrier for youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability. The result is that many young people are unable to work or participate in workforce development programs, unable to access, or experience delays accessing, Job Corps and housing, and have difficulties in accessing supports such as mental health, benefits, or athletic activities.

Where We Are

Connecticut is a national leader in the effort to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time – **reducing our numbers by 40% since 2012**¹ – but we still have far too many young children, families, youth and individuals in crisis and becoming homeless daily.

8,262 people utilized the shelter system in Connecticut last year.²

526 children under age 5 were served in emergency shelter. **90%** were children of color.³

An estimated **5,455 youth** experiencing homelessness.⁴

New homelessness is happening every day. It is not a static problem. **It will take consistent, sustained investment** to maintain our progress and realize cost savings.

Ending Homelessness Matters

Ensuring that everyone has a right to housing is not just the right thing to do, **it saves millions in state funding for generations.** Homelessness results in extreme levels of stress and trauma, especially in children, and increased use of public systems. This crisis is costly, but solvable with leadership and coordination across federal, state, and local levels.

Major Milestones in Ending Homelessness

- One of three states to make homelessness among Veterans rare, brief, and one-time.
- A 66% reduction in chronic homelessness since 2016.
- In October 2019, 170 adults experienced chronic homelessness in CT, a record low.
- Successfully housed or diverted hundreds of families, children, and young people during recent statewide challenges.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2019, Connecticut's Coordinated Access Network system fielded **72,072** calls for housing assistance, scheduled over **28,000** appointments, and held **14,962** appointments to connect households to critical housing resources.

We can build upon our success to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time for everyone in Connecticut.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: REACHINGHOME@PSCHOUSING.ORG

PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES * 860.244.0066 * WWW.PSCHOUSING.ORG

Sources:

¹ CT HMIS 2019 Annual Data, based on number of people utilizing Connecticut's shelter system

² CT HMIS 2019 Annual Data

³ Data taken from Emergency Shelter Performance Dashboard at ctcandata.org

⁴ 2019 Youth Outreach & Count, based off of 2018 methodology