



# CAFCA

Connecticut Association  
for Community Action

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## **February 11, 2020 Public Hearing Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee**

### **Governor's Proposed Midterm Budget Adjustments Department of Housing**

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members, my name is Deb Polun and I am the new Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA), the state association for Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federal designated antipoverty agencies.

On behalf of the state's Community Action Agencies, I offer support for the Governor's proposed critical investments through the Department of Housing (DOH) to support efforts to address and end homelessness in Connecticut.

Connecticut's network of Community Action Agencies connect neighbors in need in all 169 cities and towns with resources that stabilize and improve lives and communities. These include nutrition, housing and shelter, asset development and financial literacy, energy and heating assistance, and early childhood care and education. Last year, we worked with 259,512 of your constituents – children, families, single parents, and older adults – to help them build better lives.

Specific to housing, many Community Action Agencies provide:

- Emergency shelters
- Rapid Re-Housing program
- Supportive Housing for Families program
- Affordable housing services
- Eviction prevention and mediation
- Emergency rental and mortgage payments

Due to the commitment and partnership of our state government and community-based agencies, Connecticut is a national leader in efforts to address the important and expensive problem of homelessness, yet there are still far too many individuals, families with young children, and youth experiencing homelessness

on a daily basis. We know that investments in proven solutions to homelessness are necessary to continue our progress and ensure that everyone has a stable place to call home.

And, we know these investments are working. The number of people experiencing homelessness is decreasing year after year, and Connecticut has seen a 66% reduction in chronic homelessness since 2016.

Homelessness is a costly problem: it not only takes a toll on human lives, but consumes substantial public resources as well. It's clear that it costs more to allow homelessness to persist than it does to resolve it. Through coordinated efforts to secure the right housing and supports, we can resolve homelessness – one person, one family at a time.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for understanding just how critical it is to continue efforts and investments that address and end homelessness in Connecticut. Connecticut's Community Action Agencies stand ready to work with the Legislature and the Administration to ensure every person has a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home.