

**Appropriations Budget Hearing on Governor's proposed Mid-term  
Budget Adjustments for FY2021  
Department of Housing  
Tuesday, February 11th, 2020**

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

Connecticut continues to be a leader in the nation in efforts to address the important and expensive problem of homelessness – but we still have far too many individuals, families with young children, and youth becoming homeless daily. In Greater New Haven, we see between 30-50 families and up to 100 individuals a week who are homeless or on the brink of homelessness. While we are currently able to divert over 70% of families from shelter, continued investment in proven solutions to homelessness are necessary to sustain and improve our progress and ensure that every youth, family, and individual has a stable place to call home. Investments in coordinated access, diversion and innovative housing solutions are working: the numbers of those experiencing homelessness are going down year after year. Connecticut has seen a 66% reduction in chronic homelessness since 2016.

During this legislative session we ask that you maintain vital homeless system resources for youth, individuals and families. This includes funding the Department of Housing's Housing/Homeless Services line at \$85.8 million, and the Homeless Youth line at \$2.3 million. While the Governor's mid-term budget adjustments protect and preserve the Department of Housing's Housing/Homelessness Services line and Homeless Youth line, the following additional investments are necessary in making homelessness rare, brief and one time by 2023.

- Create a stable funding stream for the Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) 2-1-1 by providing \$2.3 million annually to the Department of Housing's Housing/Homeless Services line.
- A targeted investment of \$1.47 million in the Department of Housing's Housing/Homeless Services will enhance our state's capacity to quickly resolve episodes of homelessness for individuals and youth requiring shelter through the use of flexible funds for diversion and rapid exit.
- Add \$1 million each for rental assistance and services to provide stable housing and services for highly vulnerable people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

370 James Street, Suite 403  
New Haven, CT 06513  
tel 203-772-2010  
fax 203-773-0332  
uwgnh.org



In Greater New Haven, we are actively working to align services such as healthcare, street outreach, public housing and employment in order to reduce the number of families becoming homeless and ensure that those entering the homeless system can leave as quickly as possible. We use innovative approaches and partnerships such as alignment with our city officials across the region, hospital partners such as Yale New Haven Hospital and employment through pilots such as Secure Jobs. We understand that the needs facing households experiencing homelessness can be complex but with effective and sustained coordination, we are able to reduce barriers for clients trying to access services. The investments that the state has made to date in those coordination efforts via the CAN have made much of this possible and strongly encourage you to continue your work to stabilize and increase these supports to truly make homelessness rare, brief and one time in Connecticut.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly E. Fitzgerald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "K" and "F".

Kelly Fitzgerald  
Greater New Haven Coordinated Access Network Director  
United Way of Greater New Haven