



community
solutions, inc.

Administrative Offices
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DATE: February 11, 2020
TO: Appropriations Committee
FROM: Fernando J. Muñiz, Chief Executive Officer
RE: Governor's Budget

Good afternoon distinguished members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Judicial and Corrections.

My name is Fernando Muñiz and I'm the CEO of Community Solutions, Inc. (CSI). Since 1962, CSI has promoted the independence, responsible citizenship and well-being of individuals and families involved in the criminal justice, juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify regarding the Governor's budget, which shortchanges Connecticut's most vulnerable people by providing no additional funding for critical human services. Since 2007 community nonprofits like CSI have been **underfunded by at least \$461 million** because state funding has not kept pace with inflation. At the same time, demand for community services continues to increase. Today there are several hundred people who could be released to community settings but remain in expensive prisons because the state does not fund enough community placements.

Community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut, serving people in need and employing tens of thousands. For example, my organization operates 17 criminal justice and child welfare programs in Bridgeport, Bloomfield, Danbury, Hartford, Meriden, New London, Norwich, Plainville, Torrington and Waterbury. We employ nearly 300 people in those communities and serve many thousands of people every year. While we continue to provide high quality services, state funding has not kept up with inflation which makes it harder for nonprofits like ours to cover our costs.

The legislature should appropriate \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits. Since 2007 state funding shortfalls mean community nonprofits have fallen \$461 million behind the cost of services. The legislature should establish a five-year program to restore that funding, beginning with \$128 million (net cost of \$67 million after federal reimbursements) for FY 2021.

This funding is critical for meeting the needs of our state's most vulnerable residents.