

## Testimony Regarding DDS Budget - Hearing 2/21/2020

Dear Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Benjamin Davies, I live in Bolton, and I am an employee of Journey Found, Inc. I am writing to comment on the state budget this year and the next few years.

Once again, Connecticut's non-profits are at the mercy of the state budget. Community nonprofits, such as Journey Found, provide vital resources, programs and services to adults with a variety of intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) throughout Connecticut. Community providers give people hope, purpose and the help they need. How our State's leadership address the impending deficit will have a direct impact on me and others you represent.

I have worked in the private sector for over 15 years and seen first-hand how much good we do and how little respect we get come budget time. I am requesting that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over 5 years for community nonprofits. Since 2007, nonprofits have lost at least that amount in state funding that has not kept pace with inflation or adequately covered increased costs and demands for services in the last 13 years.

Nonprofits don't have a choice if funding is cut — they can't raise taxes or increase charges for services. All they can do is close programs and lay-off staff, providing less to the people who need their services. More cuts will mean fewer things that make our district a great place to live and work — less support for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and less help for people in need of mental health and addiction treatment. Since you need to stretch limited funds, I also urge you to support proposals to shift more expensive state-operated programs into the community.

We need to address increasing needs in the community. The programs and services Journey Found and other community nonprofits provide to the residents of Connecticut are a vital part of our cities and towns, allowing families, seniors and individuals with complex needs to live productive lives in the community, and contribute in to making Connecticut a great place to live and raise a family. Cost-effective, high quality services provided in the community can be part of the solution to the state's budgeting problems, through the shifting of state-provided services to the nonprofit sector. I ask that you commit to increased funding by \$461 million by 2025, appropriate \$128 million in new funding for community nonprofits in FY 2021 and index increased inflation to ensure that state funding will keep pace with increased costs in the future.

Thank you for your time and efforts.  
Benjamin Davies