



**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Testimony**  
**Governor's FY 2023 Proposed Budget Adjustments for Conservation and Development**  
**Agencies including the Department of Housing (DOH)**

**Appropriations Committee**  
**February 16, 2022**

Good evening, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **several of Governor Lamont's proposals to reduce homelessness and preserve and expand the availability of affordable housing in Connecticut.**

**The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region.** As a community foundation, we manage approximately \$1 billion in assets. In the past two years, the Foundation has distributed a record-breaking \$97 million in grants to promote equitable opportunity for all residents in our region. Made possible by the gifts of generous individuals, families and organizations, the Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$894 million since its founding in 1925.

As part of our efforts to dismantle structural racism and improve social and economic mobility for Black and Latinx residents of Greater Hartford, the Hartford Foundation seeks to **increase the number of Hartford residents living in higher opportunity neighborhoods.** Higher opportunity neighborhoods are defined by a variety of factors, including low unemployment, better performing schools, lower crime and greater availability of quality, affordable housing stock.

The Hartford Foundation seeks to increase the number of Hartford residents living in higher opportunity neighborhoods both by increasing opportunities in Hartford neighborhoods and by increasing the ability of Hartford residents to move to other higher opportunity areas throughout the Greater Hartford region if they so choose. In order to support these outcomes, the Foundation invests in efforts designed to increase the stability, availability, and quality of affordable housing in the Greater Hartford region; align and leverage additional investment in Hartford neighborhoods; and increase social strength and connectedness of Hartford neighborhoods. COVID has reinforced the need for all of us to live in safe, stable homes, in safe, stable neighborhoods, in safe, stable communities.

Public commitment must address the interplay of basic human needs, including access to food, mental and physical health care services, housing and other needs, and provide adequate support to the nonprofit organizations providing these services.

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The Foundation asks that members of the committee support the following proposals and expansions from the Governor's budget for the Department of Housing (DOH):

- The preservation of the \$100 million bond authorization for the Affordable Housing FLEX Fund and \$50 million bond authorization for the state Housing Trust Fund in the FY 2023 budget.
- An increase to DOH's Housing/Homeless Services line by at least \$20 million in FY23 to expand the Rental Assistance Program (RAP), including \$2 million to provide rental assistance to 200 scattered-site supportive housing units for highly vulnerable individuals and families.

In addition, the Foundation offers its support for Governor Lamont's proposed allocation of \$50 million in American Rescue Plan recovery funds to support the creation of 350 additional housing units for households with incomes between 30% and 50% of area median income.

Connecticut has made significant progress in addressing homelessness, but the challenges in finding and keeping affordable permanent housing persist. While the homeless population has decreased in Connecticut, every day approximately 3,000 people still don't have a home of their own. In Hartford, 57 percent of renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing, leaving little to cover other expenses such as transportation, childcare, or food.

Significant portions of our past and current investments have focused on preventing and reducing homelessness in Greater Hartford. On an annual basis, the Foundation awards approximately \$1 million to local nonprofit organizations to provide access to emergency shelter, housing subsidies, case management, eviction prevention and landlord negotiation, employment services, and other housing services to residents at-risk or experiencing homelessness. This includes support to the Greater Hartford Coordinated Access Network for rapid re-housing services during the winter.

We are pleased that the Governor's budget proposal maintains funding for homeless prevention efforts. The Foundation asks the committee to support the following proposals and expansions from the budget for the Department of Housing (DOH):

- \$2.935 million in the Homeless Youth line
- \$85.323 million for the Housing/Homeless Services line
- \$637K to the Municipal Housing/Homeless Services line
- \$100 million bond authorization for the Affordable Housing FLEX Fund and \$50 million bond authorization for the state Housing Trust Fund

In addition, the Foundation also urges support for an additional \$2.3 million in DOH's Housing/Homeless Services line to provide critical staff infrastructure support to [Coordinated Access Networks \(CANs\) and 2-1-1](#). 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 CANs.

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The Foundation also supports:

- An increase to DOH's Housing/Homeless Services line by at least \$20 million in FY23 to expand the [Rental Assistance Program \(RAP\)](#), including \$2 million to provide rental assistance to 200 scattered-site supportive housing units for highly vulnerable individuals and families.
- An additional \$2.5 million in DOH's Housing/Homeless Services line to establish and implement a [proven eviction prevention model](#) that leverages Right to Counsel legal services and couples them with high-quality social work to address vulnerable renter's needs.
- Providing an additional \$13.34 million in FY 23 (\$8.08 million at DOH and \$5.26 million at DMHAS) to provide homeless and housing service organizations [funding for adequate wages, benefits, and professional development for front line workers](#), increasing rent and utility costs, and better access to technology via:
  - \$7.47 million increase in DOH Housing/Homeless Services line
  - \$169K increase in DOH Municipal Housing/Homeless Services line
  - \$436K increase in DOH Homeless Youth line

The Foundation looks forward to continuing its work with policymakers, nonprofits, and residents to develop effective long-term policies that ensure all Connecticut residents have access to quality, affordable housing in higher opportunity neighborhoods.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at [policy@hfpg.org](mailto:policy@hfpg.org) or 860-548-1888.

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