



**Bonding Bill, An Act Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State for Capital Improvements, Transportation and Other Purposes**

**Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee**

**Wednesday, March 24**

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Scanlon, Senator Martin, Representative Cheeseman and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit testimony today on **Senate Bill 887, the Governor's Bonding Bill, An Act Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State for Capital Improvements, Transportation and Other Purposes.**

**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 2020, the Foundation distributed a record-breaking \$52 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 \$837 million since its founding in 1925. While significant, these resources pale in comparison to what is needed and obligated from the public sector.

**As the committee reviews the Governor's bonding proposal, we ask that members recognize the critical importance of a sustainable and long-term public commitment to nonprofits.** Since the COVID-19 outbreak, our nonprofits have needed to take on additional financial burdens in order for them to work remotely and purchase personal protective equipment to protect the health and safety of their staff and clients. Many of these costs are not reimbursable by the State, Coronavirus Relief Funds, or Paycheck Protection Program loans. The pandemic has also highlighted the invaluable role smaller, neighborhood-based nonprofit organizations play in providing services to some of our most challenged residents. To reach these residents, state funds must be accessible not only to larger multiservice organizations but also to these smaller organizations as well, something that may require a reconsideration of application processes and outreach regarding funding opportunities.

**We encourage the committee to restore the \$25 million in grants-in-aid in each year of the biennium for the Nonprofit grant program.** Since 2013, the General Assembly has authorized at least \$25 million for grant-in-aid relief annually to be used for capital and infrastructure projects for nonprofit health and human services providers through the Office of Policy and Management's Nonprofit Grant Program. Unfortunately, over the past two years, the State Bond Commission has failed to allocate any of these funds.

Over the past year, the Hartford Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund has made more than 230 grants, distributing more than \$9.6 million to nonprofit organizations and local school districts, since the start of the pandemic. The fund initially focused on basic human needs as a result of health and economic impacts of the pandemic, and then transitioned to supporting a wide variety

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of nonprofits to provide services safely, including personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning costs, technology and minor building enhancements. As nonprofits continue to recover from the pandemic, the Nonprofit Grant Program would be another resource for additional enhancements that still need to be done to protect clients and staff from COVID-19 or to prepare for any future public health emergency, as capital funding pays for renovations to physical space, upgrading information technology, improving ventilation systems and retrofitting vehicles to safely transport people, especially those at higher risk of severe disease.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to supporting those most in need during these historically challenging times. The Hartford Foundation is eager to partner with legislators, the administration, advocates, philanthropy and other stakeholders to ensure that Connecticut's economic recovery positively impacts all of its residents.

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