



February 16, 2017 Public Hearing Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee

Governor's Proposed Budget

Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members, my name is Deborah Monahan and I serve as the Executive Director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) and as Chair of the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA), the state association for Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies, or CAAs. **I am here to discuss the Governor's proposed budget, especially the portion of the budget that deals with our line item - Human Services Infrastructure (HSI)–Community Action Program (CAP) in the Department of Social Services (DSS) budget.** We are still in the process of analyzing the budget to determine exactly what the proposed changes mean for our network, but I can definitely testify as to how critical these funds are for our agencies.

Connecticut's Community Action Network—the state and federal designated antipoverty network—provides human needs services such as food, shelter, heating assistance, and childcare to limited income individuals, children, and families in every community across Connecticut. We provide these services through our proven, multigenerational, customer-focused, integrated service delivery system called the Human Services Infrastructure, or HSI. This comprehensive, wraparound case management approach connects every person that comes through our doors to the tools, resources, programs, and services they need to move towards short and long-term economic stability.

For over thirty years, you have made a commitment to supporting our network in fighting the causes and conditions of poverty by providing some state funding to this effort. And, with our economy still struggling and with poverty rates stuck above 30% in many of our cities and over 20% in many towns, now is not the time to pull back from this important commitment. Our CAA Network has partnered and worked with you and state agencies since this budgetary commitment was made to support antipoverty agencies as a partner in providing basic services to those with limited incomes and who are most vulnerable to the effects of poverty. This successful partnership has been instrumental in developing an efficient and effective statewide system of serving our neediest residents. As a result, our agencies are well-known and trusted in our communities as the place to turn to for help when faced with financial hardship.

HSI-CAP, the “core funding” for Community Action Agencies, enables us to provide vital, basic services to those who need them. This includes case management services; helping clients connect to local, State or other social services; community outreach; employment services; education and training services; and, information and referral services. Last year, Connecticut's Community Action Agency Network helped more than 357,500 of your constituents—seniors, single parents, individuals, children, youth, and families—statewide solve problems, avoid crises, and save money.

Through the provision of case management services, the state's CAA Network has been able to expand the services and programs it offers. In addition to administering the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), CAAs now manage the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Case Management program and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach program. CAFCA and the CAAs can save the state time and money, and help avoid duplicative state administrative efforts by running similar programs for low-income residents across state agencies and/or as the Administrative Services Organization (ASO) for federal block grants and other state funding streams requiring direct service provision and coordinated case management.

We are also one of the only service provider networks in the state to use a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework like the one the legislature has endorsed for many years. Through RBA, we track, analyze, and report meaningful customer, agency, and community outcomes and results, ensuring a positive return on investment for the network and the state. You can read more about the work we did this past year and hear the stories of the people we served in our 2016 Annual Report, *Realignment, Resilience and Renewal*, which can be accessed at www.cafca.org.

Another important feature of HSI is that it is used as a state match for federal funds, essentially doubling its value. Additionally, last year, for every dollar of HSI funds used, \$140 dollars was leveraged for programs to help Connecticut families and communities. That's an additional \$380M in local, federal and private funds for needed programs and services. Surely that's an investment worth keeping.

Thank you for your time and consideration. And thank you for understanding the important role Community Action Agencies play in the lives of struggling families here in Connecticut. We look forward to working with you and the Administration to continue serving our state's neediest residents, and I am happy to take any questions you may have.