



February 21, 2018 Public Hearing Testimony before the Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee

Governor's Proposed Midterm Budget Adjustments

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). I am also the 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.** What I would want all of you to know is how important the Human Services Infrastructure–Community Action Program funds are to our network.

As the largest statewide safety net service provider, Connecticut's Community Action Network provides limited income individuals, children, and families in all 169 cities and towns with essential, basic needs services like food, shelter, heating assistance, housing, and childcare. By utilizing a comprehensive, customer-focused, integrated service delivery system called the Human Services Infrastructure, or HSI, every customer that comes through our doors is connected to the tools, resources, programs, and services they need to move towards short and long-term economic stability.

HSI-CAP is the "core funding" for Community Action Agencies, the state and federal designated antipoverty agencies. It enables us to successfully provide customers with multigenerational, bundled services such as holistic case management, community outreach, employment, education and training, and information and referral to community, local, state, and federal organizations. Last year, Connecticut's CAA Network helped more than 313,500 of your constituents statewide solve problems, avoid crises, and save money.

Since this budgetary commitment was made more than 30 years ago, our Community Action Network has remained dedicated to partnering with you and state agencies to work on behalf of those with limited incomes across Connecticut who are the most vulnerable to the harsh impact of poverty. This successful partnership was crucial in developing the efficient and effective statewide system used to serve the state's poorest residents. As a result, our agencies have a long history of being well-known and trusted in the communities they serve as the place to turn to for help when people are struggling.

Additionally, through the provision of case management services, the state's CAA Network administers the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and manages both 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 limited 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.

Our network's success in providing antipoverty programs and services is paralleled by our reporting transparency and accountability. We are one of the only service provider networks in Connecticut to use a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework like the one the legislature has endorsed for years. Through RBA, we track, analyze, measure, and report meaningful customer, agency, and community outcomes and results—ensuring a positive return on investment for the network and the state. Our 2017 Annual Report, *Achieving Excellence in Challenging Times*, highlights the work we did last year and can be found at www.cafca.org.

Finally, HSI-CAP is a smart investment in our human service delivery system. It is used as a state match for federal funds which essentially doubles its value, and last year for every dollar of HSI funds used \$80.85 dollars was leveraged for programs to help our state's families and communities. That's an additional \$221M in local, federal and private funds for needed programs and services.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for understanding the key role Community Action Agencies play in the lives of those facing financial hardship here in Connecticut. We look forward to working with you and the Administration to continue serving our state's neediest residents.