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Public Hearing Testimony before the
Connecticut General Assembly's Appropriations Committee

Governor's Proposed FY 2025 Midterm Budget Adjustments for Human
Service Agencies
H.B. No. 5048

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Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA)

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Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Berthel, Representative Nuccio
and Distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for holding this public hearing about the Governor's midterm budget proposals. The Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA) is the state association that works with Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federally designated anti-poverty agencies that provide a wide variety of services to nearly 200,000 low- and moderate-income people in all 169 cities and towns across the state. More information about Community Action Agencies is included at the end of this testimony.

I am here to share some thoughts on the creation of Opportunity Centers as proposed by Governor Lamont.

The Governor's proposal creates a coordinated service delivery model for various state agencies by co-locating staff at Opportunity Centers to deliver social services by leveraging state and local community partnerships to help residents attain self-sufficiency. It also allocates \$1M in bond funding to refurbish a space in Hartford to pilot the program.

Connecticut's Community Action Agencies already use a very similar service delivery model and can provide invaluable support in this effort.

About Community Action Agencies

For over 50 years, Community Action Agencies, the largest statewide safety net service provider, have been connecting neighbors in need with resources that stabilize and improve lives and communities. By using a holistic,

comprehensive, multigenerational, approach – much like the Opportunity Center model outlined in the Governor’s proposal – called the Human Services Infrastructure, or HSI, CAAs work with people in need to plan, achieve, and maintain a realistic path to short and long-term economic self-sufficiency and success. This “no wrong door” approach helps ensure that anyone who comes into a Community Action Agency for any reason gets assessed for all programs, services, and resources they may be eligible for; both internally or through community partnerships or collaborations with various state agencies. These include, but are not limited to:

- Nutrition (inc. SNAP outreach and application assistance, Meals on Wheels, and Congregate meals)
- Housing and shelter
- Asset development and financial literacy
- Energy and heating assistance
- Job training
- Early childhood care and education
- Case management

A Profile of Services table is at the end of this testimony and shows the services provided by Community Action Agencies.

Community Action’s state partnerships

Connecticut’s CAA Network has a long history of partnership and collaboration with state agencies such as the Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Social Services (DSS) and others in the provision of service delivery. In some instances, CAAs are co-located or in close proximity to state agencies and this allows for a more seamless provision of services. Our long-standing holistic model of service delivery which was developed in partnership with the Department of Social Services and relies on collaboration and partnership makes us well-suited to continue partnering with the State of Connecticut as current and future initiatives and programs.

Let’s talk about how we can expand our statewide reach and partnerships with state agencies like DOL, DSS and DOH to best serve Connecticut residents in need and help them reach their full potential.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our state. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions at rhonda@cafca.org or 860-305-2937.

