



DATE: March 26, 2021
TO: Appropriations Committee
FROM: Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, The Alliance
RE: S.B. 340 An Act Concerning Funding for Housing Services

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy at the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide organization representing the nonprofit sector. Community nonprofits provide essential services to over half a million individuals and families in Connecticut every year, and employ 14% of Connecticut's workforce, improving the quality of life in communities across the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 340 An Act Concerning Funding for Housing Services. As you know, The Alliance has respectfully **requested that the legislature increase funding by \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits**. Since 2007, community nonprofits have lost at least \$461 million in state funding that has not kept pace with inflation or adequately covered increased costs and demand for services over the last thirteen years.

Nonprofit homeless services organizations, and the people who work for them, play a critical role in protecting and assisting Connecticut's most vulnerable people. During the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, homeless services have been an important part of the state's critical infrastructure and emergency response system.

Like community providers across the entire human services system, homeless services providers continue to be funded by state agencies at levels far below the actual cost of delivering homeless and housing assistance services. These services include shelter operations and case management, homeless outreach, shelter diversion and housing problem-solving, rapid re-housing case management and housing navigation, supportive housing program operations, and supportive housing case management. For many years, the State has asked these organizations to do more with less, to maintain the same high quality of services without any additional funding, and in some years, while sustaining funding cuts. All the while, costs of operation have increased by as much as 28% over the last 14 years. This model is not sustainable and requires the legislature to act now to increase funding.

In the midst of a deadly pandemic with housing insecurity growing, we urge the legislature to adequately fund community nonprofits including homeless services organizations.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony this afternoon. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or recommendations.