



2012 Legislative Agenda

The Middlesex 10 Year Plan is working, transitioning the homeless to permanent housing and saving money! Here's how our state can help us accomplish even more:

Continue to Invest in Supportive Housing. We applaud the Governor and the General Assembly for including \$30 million in the current budget toward the production of new supportive housing units! This proven and cost effective solution to chronic homelessness matches supportive services with affordable housing, reducing the use of expensive services like hospital ER visits, law enforcement, and residential treatment and dramatically enhancing the quality of life for the resident and the rest of the community. **It costs more than \$40,000 annually in public resources to provide emergency services for a homeless person, but less than \$20,000 annually to provide permanent supportive housing.**

Make the Security Deposit Guarantee Program more accessible. This program is a vital tool to move families from shelter to permanent housing, since many who can afford to pay a monthly rent cannot afford a security deposit. Although DSS recently reinstated the program, new restrictions have made it more difficult for some people who need help to gain access to it. The result will be higher costs to the state, since people who cannot move into permanent housing are forced to remain in the shelter system.

Expand the Rental Assistance Program (RAP). Housing subsidies are the single most effective intervention to end family homelessness. Assisting families to obtain their own housing increases housing stability. What's more, it ultimately costs less than supporting the family in a shelter—and repairing the long-term harm that results from homelessness, especially to children. However, the waiting list of eligible families remains long.

Support ongoing funding for the HOMEConnecticut program. By offering planning grants and incentives, HOMEConnecticut encourages Connecticut towns to engage in a deliberate and inclusive process of determining what kinds of affordable housing they need, where it should be placed, and how it can fit into individual communities. The success of this process has been demonstrated in Old Saybrook, where a 16-unit affordable housing development is taking shape with the enthusiastic support of the local population. Many towns are now in various stages of the planning process, and this needs to be sustained by continued investment by the state.

Invest in programs that enable homeless people—especially ex-offenders—to obtain and retain employment. While our state's One-Stop Career Centers provide an array of valuable services, people who are chronically homeless or re-entering the community after incarceration need special assistance to get and keep jobs. Subsidized employment and job training programs monitored by qualified nonprofit agencies can help these individuals move toward self-sufficiency and restore their sense of self-worth.

Simplify State Processes for Financing and Permitting Affordable Housing. Developing additional affordable housing creates jobs and promotes economic growth, but it is a very difficult process in our state. Applications for financing and permits are extraordinarily complex, and approvals can take years. There are developers willing and able to build affordable housing, but our state needs to help them rather than create roadblocks.

The Middlesex County Coalition on Housing and Homelessness is a coalition of community leaders representing nonprofits, government, faith groups, and businesses. Its purpose is to implement the Middlesex County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, which seeks to prevent and eradicate homelessness by 2018.