

# Connecticut Department of Housing



## *At a Glance*

**EVONNE M. KLEIN, Commissioner**

**Nick Lundgren, Deputy Commissioner**

***Established* – June 2012 via Public Act 12-1; fully implemented and funded July 2013**

***Statutory authority* - Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 8-37r**

***Central office* – 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106**

***Number of employees* – 47 including 13 durational staff members who strictly work on our Superstorm Sandy recovery effort, which is funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant –Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program.**

***Recurring operating expenses* - \$6,436,497**

***Organizational structure* – Office of the Commissioner, Housing Development, Individual & Family Support, Community Development and Technical Services, Policy & Research and Housing programs, and CDBG-DR Superstorm Sandy**

## **Mission**

***The mission of the Department of Housing (DOH) is to foster a Connecticut where affordable housing, in strong, vibrant, and inclusive communities, is accessible to individuals and families across the state and that homelessness is truly a thing of the past.***

## **Statutory Responsibility**

Under the provisions of Conn. Gen. Statutes Chapters 50, 124b, 126a, 127c, 128, 129, 130, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137c, 137e, 138b, 138c, 138e, 138f, 138h, 138i, 138j, 298, 319i, 319y, 319uu, 412, 439, 541, 588x, 825, 828, and 833a, DOH is the lead state agency on all matters relating to housing and is responsible for advancing strategies and administering programs that promote the development, redevelopment, and preservation of housing for very low, low and moderate income families, community revitalization as well as financial and other support for our most vulnerable residents.

## **Public Service**

Fully formed in July 2013, DOH is a compilation of housing and community development programs and staff from multiple state agencies: the Departments of Economic and Community Development, Social Services, and Mental Health and Addiction Services as well as the Office of Policy and Management. With all of these programs consolidated within one agency, the Department provides leadership for all aspects of the state's housing policy and planning and the coordinated implementation of the state's housing agenda.

DOH strives to provide public outreach and educational workshops to inform the public of its funding opportunities and assistance programs. Department staff hosted and participated in workshops and constituent fairs around the state, providing in-depth explanations of the agency's policies and programs. In addition, the DOH Commissioner has traveled to over half of the communities in the state to meet with local municipal and housing leaders to introduce the Department and discuss ways in which its initiatives can revitalize their neighborhoods and increase the provision of affordable housing for their residents.

The Department's open door policy encourages municipal leaders, public agencies, community groups, advocates, local housing authorities and other for-profit and non-profit housing developers to meet with Department leadership and staff to discuss their housing issues and needs. Strong outreach and technical assistance efforts as well as improved processes, such as a streamlined application process, have led to an influx in interest and applications for DOH's highly competitive funding initiatives.

Most importantly, the Department is dedicated to assisting individuals with their housing needs. DOH's Individual & Family Support unit manages a must answer information & referral line for state residents seeking assistance from one of the Department's support programs or with their unique housing problems. DOH's programs enable the provision of the full spectrum of housing options for these individuals from emergency shelters, transitional living programs, to permanent supportive housing, affordable rental housing, and affordable homeownership. In addition, the agency funds a free rental housing locator service and provides leadership in implementing a new coordinated access system statewide that offers comprehensive assessments and referral services to meet the housing needs of vulnerable individuals and families. Support programs such as the rental subsidy programs, security deposit guarantee program, eviction and foreclosure prevention program, and homeowner rehabilitation programs enable individuals to maintain and improve their housing. DOH continues to discuss and realize improvements to these support programs.

### **Improvements/Achievements 2015-2016**

- In August 2015, the federal government designated Connecticut as the first state in the nation to end chronic homelessness among Veterans.
- Following an extensive review by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), in coordination with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA), Connecticut was certified as one of only two states to have effectively ended homelessness among Veterans.

- DOH awarded almost \$12.65 million in Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to 21 Connecticut communities, some of which applied for and were awarded funds jointly. Twelve will fund public housing modernizations, seven will fund housing rehabilitation programs, one will fund a public facilities project, and one will fund a public service program. These federally funded grants are used to ensure decent affordable housing, provide services to the most vulnerable Connecticut citizens, and fund ADA compliance and municipal infrastructure improvements.
- DOH worked closely with municipalities interested in adopting Incentive Housing Zones (IHZ). Since the inception of the IHZ program, 10 municipalities have adopted approved zones, 2 municipalities have received “preliminary determination of eligibility” and 2 of them have completed housing projects within their IHZs. Overall 72 municipalities received technical assistance funding to determine the feasibility of developing zones in their communities. Some are close to final zone adoption and approval.
- To assist shoreline owners interested in protecting their homes and businesses from future storms, DOH established a fund, envisioned by Governor Malloy, to provide low-interest loans to property owners in coastal municipalities to finance or refinance property elevations and retrofitting for flood protection activities. Over 300 homeowners have inquired about the program and have completed their initial intake form. Nine loans have been closed totaling about \$1,434,000. There are over 20 applicants who are at various stages of the application review.
- DOH provided funding for the annual homelessness Point in Time (PIT) Count, which provides data on individuals staying in emergency shelters and transitional housing programs, as well as living in places unintended for human habitation. This past year, 3,902 people were identified as experiencing homelessness, the lowest count in Connecticut since the counts began, illustrating a reduction in Veteran, family and chronic homelessness.
- DOH awarded \$30 million under the Affordable Homeownership round to fund 17 applications that will create homeownership opportunities for eligible individuals and families across the state. The successful applicants in this affordable homeownership round include new construction and rehabilitation projects and programs that finance the construction, purchase, or rehabilitation of homeownership units, critical improvements necessary for accessibility for owner-occupants, and owner-occupied small multi-family properties and programs that help bring homeownership within reach of moderate income individuals and families.
- An existing DOH staffer is now serving as a Housing Coordinator for Youth and Young Adults who are experiencing homelessness, helping lead the effort to end youth homelessness by 2020.
- DOH, in coordination with 6 sister state agencies, applied for and was one of 8 states chosen to participate in the Innovative Accelerator Program in which Connecticut will get technical assistance in order to develop a model that will use Medicaid as a payer of services for permanent supportive housing.
- As of June 2016, there are 5,864 households housed with State Rental Assistance Program (RAP) vouchers and 7,987 households housed under the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program.
- In 2014, Governor Dannel P. Malloy became 1 of only 4 Governors to sign onto the Zero: 2016 initiative, whose goal is to end chronic homelessness by the end of this year. DOH is helping lead the effort, working with partners to create a streamlined system to verify

homelessness, match individuals to housing assistance and permanent homes. Since 2015, 981 people have been placed into permanent housing as a result of this dynamic new approach to addressing homelessness.

- The Department of Housing is partnering with the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), Eversource Energy and United Illuminating Company to improve and integrate application processes so that each funding application includes utility subsidies in the initial capital stack. During FY 2015, DOH and CHFA completed two funding rounds in which each applicant was required to provide a Letter of Participation from the respective utility company that outlined the estimated capital contribution to the project and the proposed energy efficiency measures. DOH and its partners will continue to work together and provide outreach to potential funding applicants to encourage them to contact the utility companies early in the predevelopment process and to take advantage of technical assistance opportunities so that cost effective energy efficiency measures are incorporated into the design.
- DOH continued its successful Predevelopment Loan Program, which is directed to housing developers seeking assistance with predevelopment costs incurred in connection with the provision of housing for low and moderate income persons and families. It supports the goal of enabling the best affordable housing developments to advance to the stage where they can obtain all necessary financing. In FY 16 DOH approved 21 predevelopment loans.
- Consistent with Governor Malloy's \$300 million commitment to revitalize the state sponsored housing portfolio (SSHP), DOH awarded nearly \$18 million to rehabilitate affordable rental units in 10 SSHP developments.
- DOH staff is active participants on numerous committees and commissions that work to better meet the housing needs of Connecticut residents, such as the Opening Doors, Steering Committee, Reaching Home Homeless Families Workgroup, TOD Coordinating Committee, Interagency Committee on Supportive Housing, DOC/CSSD Taskforce, amongst others.
- Through Governor Malloy's 10 year, \$300 million State-Sponsored Housing Portfolio Revitalization Initiative, DOH and CHFA have helped redevelop 49 properties representing a total investment of \$93.2 million. A rolling predevelopment loan fund was set up for SSHP properties in the amount of \$2 million and an additional \$2 million has been requested to meet the predevelopment needs of the portfolio. Fifteen predevelopment loan applications have been awarded funding totaling \$2.8 million. Costs include architectural design, environmental studies, and other early stage development expenses. As part of the effort to provide technical assistance to the SSHP properties owners. DOH continues to work with the 3 firms to deploy technical assistance. To date assistance to over 15 properties has been provided.
- In 2015, DOH set up a SSHP critical needs fund of \$3 million for properties that were identified in the capital plan as having critical needs prior to their capital funding transaction year. In 2016 an additional \$3 million was added to the fund to ensure that the critical needs can be addressed as they arise. Applications are received on a rolling basis. Since the inception of the program 22 applications have been received totaling \$5.3 million and 17 have been approved totaling \$5.1 million. Of the 17 approved, 6 have been completed, 6 are between 85-98% completed and 5 are between 0-67 percent completed.
- During CY15, DOH completed 2,312 units of housing and over 742 units so far in CY16 with over 3,600 currently under construction.

- During the seventh round of the state's Competitive Housing Assistance for Multifamily Properties (CHAMP) initiative, DOH awarded \$20 million to 6 affordable and mixed-income housing development proposals. These projects will create or rehabilitate over 500 units of affordable housing and will leverage over \$66 million of non-state funds. CHAMP 7 recipients are required to create a preference for homeless Veterans for at least two of their proposed units. This requirement is one example of how DOH helped lead the effort to achieve Governor Malloy's goal of ending Veteran homelessness in the state.
- DOH invested nearly \$28 million in 8 affordable and mixed-income housing developments during the eighth round of the state's CHAMP initiative. This investment will provide for the creation or preservation of over 200 units of affordable and mixed-income housing units.
- The State of Connecticut continues to implement the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program in a manner that protects the homeowners, taxpayers and the State from fraud, waste and abuse. DOH was awarded over \$159 million of CDBG-DR funds in three tranches to assist homeowners, municipalities and small businesses recover from the damages of Superstorm Sandy. All of the funding available has been awarded, and DOH continues to work with local communities, homeowners to complete their projects. To date, DOH has completed activities with 203 homeowners, with another 79 actively under construction.
- For the CDBG-DR owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation, Mitigation and Reimbursement programs, DOH has expended more than \$43 million of the \$66 million awarded, and anticipates fully expending these funds before the end of the current fiscal year.
- The replacement of 315 publicly-assisted housing units affected by Superstorm Sandy is underway in two of the three affected communities.
- DOH successfully competed for additional federal funding under the National Disaster Resilience Competition and was awarded \$54 million to carry out additional resilience planning and infrastructure activities in New Haven and Fairfield Counties.
- DOH Commissioner Evonne Klein received the Women and Families Center's 2016 Connecticut Woman in Leadership Award for her work in the areas of affordable housing and transit-oriented development. This prestigious honor is awarded each year to a Connecticut Woman who demonstrates outstanding leadership and serves as a leading agent for positive change in the State of Connecticut.
- Connecticut received a \$3 million National Housing Trust grant to expand access to affordable housing in the state.
- Under the Second Tranche of CDBG-DR Funds the State allocated \$7 million in grants to towns and cities across Connecticut for planning activities to develop mitigation and resiliency plans.
- DOH dedicated \$10 million to existing emergency homeless shelters seeking funding to make capital improvements to their facilities to improve the quality of the services provided to shelter residents.
- DOH awarded approximately \$20 million to supplement the CHFA 9% LIHTC funding awards to build and rehabilitate 320 affordable rental units, and 65 market rate units, in 6 housing developments. These 6 projects are leveraging \$70 million in non-state funds.
- DOH was able to expand the efficiency of the Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) that are responsible for coordinating shelter intake, the rapid rehousing program, and carrying out the state-led initiative to end chronic homelessness by the end of 2016 by providing funding to community partners to staff the CANs, as well as coordinate three new CAN managers with our sister agency CHFA.

- Under Governor Malloy's leadership, the state allocated 50 additional RAP vouchers specifically for Veteran use.
- DOH rebid AIDS housing services and mobility counseling funding for the first time in 25 years to support AIDS programs and mobility counseling programs across the state and moved the programs to an evidence based model to ensure effective use of funds.
- DOH bid out \$26 million in bond funding for the creation of a new program, the Homeless Prevention and Response fund, with the goal of creating an additional 150 units of permanent supportive housing and an additional 150 units of rapid rehousing.
- DOH applied to HUD and received an additional \$400,000 for the provision of rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.
- Working with the "211" system, DOH provided funding for the Cold Weather Protocol initiative, which gave the CANs additional funding to shelter homeless individuals during the extremely cold winter.
- DOH utilized the Community Investment Account (CIA) to provide funding for numerous programs aimed at ending homelessness.
- DOH, in coordination with our advocacy partners were selected to be the national pilot site of an innovative new rapid rehousing model in which Connecticut will implement a Critical Time Intervention service delivery model to match with the rental assistance. DOH believes this match will lead to more successful outcomes for the rapid rehousing program.
- DOH applied for and received 43 new HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers, which combines rental assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and case management services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to support Veterans who are at risk of homelessness.
- DOH received the Carol E. Walter Think, Be, Lead, Change Award from the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) at their annual training institute. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in the field of homeless or housing services and is presented to an individual or agency that brings forward the spirit of the late Carol Walter, a former CCEH Executive Director.
- DOH successfully fought against legislation that would weaken C.G.S. Section 8-30g, which outlines the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Procedure, enabling affordable housing to be created in non-inclusive communities.
- DOH continued to administer the Energy Conservation Loan program and the Multifamily Energy Conservation Loan programs through which a total of 213 loans were made from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. This resulted in 204 loans for individual homeowners totaling over \$2,113,168 and 5 Loans for multifamily property owners totaling \$174,778, with the total loan amount at \$2,287,946.