STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

JOHN G. ROWLAND

GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 34

WHEREAS, the total number of individuals served by emergency shelters in Connecticut last year was 16,545, of which 2,947 were children;

WHEREAS, many more individuals and families with children living in Connecticut are homeless and often seek shelter in abandoned buildings, automobiles, or live outside or in severely overcrowded conditions;

WHEREAS, approximately 20% of people experiencing homelessness at any given time are homeless for at least a year or more, or experience repeated episodes of homelessness. Because they most often have multiple physical or mental health problems or other substantial barriers to housing stability, the needs of these individuals result in high costs to the State and local communities;

WHEREAS, supportive housing – which blends affordable housing with necessary support and employment services - is a humane, cost-effective and proven solution to ending homelessness for people who have spent months or years living on the streets or in emergency shelters;

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut has already taken the first step toward ending long-term homelessness by financing the creation of over 1,000 units of supportive housing in the last ten years;

WHEREAS, over the next ten years, the State of Connecticut, working in partnership with the Federal government, local communities, and the private sector, can make it possible for thousands of men, women, and families who face long-term homelessness due to mental illness, substance addiction and other serious health challenges to have decent housing and the services they need to regain control of their circumstances and to live active, fulfilling lives;

WHEREAS, in order to further prevent adults and families from falling into homelessness, supportive housing efforts must be coupled with effective discharge planning, particularly for those leaving the prison system, and other measures to prevent persons assisted through State programs from entering homelessness,

NOW THEREFORE, I, John G. Rowland, Governor of the State of Connecticut, acting by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State and in the spirit of cooperation and bipartisanship demanded by the importance of the matter, do hereby, ORDER AND DIRECT:

Section 1. Establishment. There is hereby established an Interagency Council on Supportive Housing and Homelessness (the "Council").

Section 2. Membership. (a) Members of the Council shall include the following or their designees: the commissioners of the Departments of Social Services, Economic and Community Development, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Public Health, Correction, Children and Families, and Veterans Affairs. Members shall also include representatives of the Governor's Office, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management or his designee, the Director of the Office for Workforce Competitiveness, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority.

(b) The Governor shall designate two members of the Council to serve as Co-Chairs.

(c) The Council may add to its membership as it deems appropriate.

Section 3. Mission. (a) The mission of the Council shall be to develop and implement strategies and solutions to address the problem of homelessness, including the development of supportive housing options and other measures designed to:

1. Reduce the number of Connecticut individuals and families that experience homelessness;
2. Reduce the inappropriate use of emergency health care, shelter, chemical dependency, corrections, foster care, and similar services; and
3. Improve the health, employability, self-sufficiency, and other social outcomes for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Section 4. Duties. The duties of the Council shall include all of the following:

(a) **Supportive housing plan.**

1) Develop a plan by September 1, 2004 for the development of an additional 900-1,000 units of permanent, supportive housing. The new supportive housing effort will be designed to enable residents to obtain and keep permanent housing, increase their job skills and income, and achieve family stability. In developing the plan, the Council shall:

   a. Determine the key characteristics of individuals and families experiencing long-term homelessness for whom affordable housing with links to support services is needed.
   b. Identify a variety of supportive housing models that address the different needs of individuals and families experiencing long-term homelessness.
   c. Determine the existing resources that may fund these models for families and individuals who are experiencing long-term homelessness.
   d. Identify the gaps in capital, operating and service funding that affect the ability to develop supportive housing models.
   e. Establish a timetable for implementation of the plan.

2) Identify means to leverage private investment and local and federal participation.
3) Expedite the integrated review, processing and commitment of designated State funds for project development, services and operation.
4) Identify and recommend changes in the homeless, housing and healthcare delivery systems that will enhance and support the State's investment in supportive housing over the long term.
5) Propose changes in laws and regulations that impede the effective delivery and coordination of services for the targeted population in affordable housing.

(b) **Additional policy reforms.** The Council may also identify other policy reforms and programs and expansions to lessen homelessness in the state, including:

1) Identify and recommend remediation actions to remove barriers to effective discharge planning from State-operated or financed institutions such as hospitals and correctional facilities.
2) Identify and recommend remediation actions to remove barriers homeless individuals and families face when attempting to access mainstream resources and services.
3) Identify and recommend models to coordinate mainstream resources and services available to the general population, or more specifically, low-income populations, that can be utilized to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness, so that housing and homelessness supports can be maximized.
4) Identify and recommend actions to expand the supply of affordable housing as a means to prevent and respond to homelessness among very low income individuals and families.

Section 5. Reporting. The Council will report to the Governor on the status of its efforts. These reports will be on annual basis or more frequently if requested by the Governor.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

Dated in Hartford, Connecticut this the 7th day of April 2004.

JOHN G. ROWLAND
Governor

By His Excellency's Command

Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State