

**To: Mayor Lauren Garrett**  
**From: Council Member Sarah Gallagher**  
**Date: March 4, 2022**  
**Re: Recommendations for Hamden's State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds**

The COVID 19 pandemic brought to light the crucial role safe, stable, affordable housing plays as a determinate of health. The pandemic made clear the inextricable link between housing and individual, community, and public health, as millions of renters- predominately people of color-struggled to remain safely and stably housed. Many of these households are severely cost burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing. Severely cost burdened poor households are more likely than other renters to sacrifice other necessities like healthy food and healthcare to pay the rent, and to experience unstable housing situations like eviction and homelessness.

To meet this crisis during the pandemic, the federal government invested more than \$46 billion dollars in emergency rental assistance. In CT, these funds were disbursed through UniteCT. To date, **UniteCT has provided assistance to more than 1000 Hamden households and there are currently an additional 788 Hamden households pending assistance.<sup>1</sup> With the need clearly greater than the amount of assistance available in the program, it is not guaranteed that our Hamden families will received the emergency assistance they need.** However, emergency rental assistance will soon come to an end and given that the need is clearly greater than the remaining resources, permanent housing solutions are needed. Investments in permanent, affordable and supportive housing at the state and local level are key to ensuring enough safe, stable housing to meet the needs of all Hamden residents now and when there is another crisis.

#### **I. Investments to Develop Affordable Housing and End Homelessness**

##### **A. Establishment and investment of a Hamden Community Land Trust. Funds will support start up activities and incorporation costs as well as funds for the acquisition of 3-6 properties equitably distributed across Hamden.**

- Eligibility Category 2.15 Long-term Housing Stability: Affordable Housing

Community land trusts (CLTs) is an increasingly common strategy to ensure the availability of permanently affordable housing for residents who might otherwise be priced out of their neighborhoods. CLTs can be particularly powerful tools in areas facing rapid economic change and appreciation in land values. Several communities, including Washington DC and Albany, NY, are using SLFRF to start up and/or invest in CTLs as follows:

- Washington DC's SLFRF Plan includes \$2,000,000 for a Community Land Trust Grant. This grant of funds will go to support the work of the Douglass Community Land Trust to enable the inclusive and equitable development and preservation of permanently affordable housing, local small business, and other public assets. Treasury Eligibility Code: Build and Preserve Affordable Housing A02310 3.10
- Albany, NY:  
The Albany County Land Bank plays a significant role in returning vacant, abandoned or tax-foreclosed properties back to productive use throughout Albany County. Since it was established

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<sup>1</sup> [UniteCT - Emergency Rental Assistance for Connecticut's Economy](#)

in 2014 the Land bank has been supporting neighborhood revitalization efforts with a focus on addressing the tremendous racial housing and economic disparities that affect County residents who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This approach will serve as a catalyst for more investment into rehabilitating vacant buildings, creating permanently affordable housing, transforming vacant lots, increasing affordable homeownership and eliminating blighted structure that plague neighborhoods.

**B. Establishment and funding of a Hamden Affordable Housing Trust Fund to provide grants to support affordable and supportive housing developments, including developments supported by LIHTC and capitalized operating reserves to ensure affordability for our lowest income residents. Other uses can include down payment assistance for low income homeowners.**

- Eligibility Categories 2.15 Long-term Housing Stability: Affordable Housing and 2.2 Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid

SLFRF can support the production of affordable and supportive rental housing units to mitigate the broader impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Funds are to be used for grants, loans, or other financial assistance to projects receiving or applying for federal or state low-income housing tax credits, state tax-exempt bond financing, or other state financial assistance. Funds can be used to support acquisition, predevelopment activities, capitalizing operating reserves and other uses that support the creation of permanent affordable and supportive housing across Hamden. Funds can also be used in coordination with properties acquired via the Hamden Community Land Trust.

The goal of this funding is to support the creation of at least 200 units of affordable rental housing via existing state funding processes. The Rental Housing Production program also promotes equity by providing affordable rental housing to minority populations and those living in disproportionately impacted communities.

Examples from Other Jurisdiction's SLFRF Recovery Plans Submitted to Treasury:

- CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, VA. Chesterfield County will utilize Recovery Funds to accelerate and incentivize affordable housing for low-income residents. The county is investing \$4 million in an Affordable Housing Trust Fund that provides financial resources to increase the production of affordable housing units. The fund will also help create stable housing and improve both the short- and long-term health outcomes of low-income communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO Hamilton County has dedicated \$20 million in Recovery Funds to construct new multi- and single-family affordable housing units. Additionally, the county invested another 10 million to update 60,000 affordable housing units and \$5 million for housing protections to help prevent homelessness through wraparound services. This comprehensive affordable housing plan aims to address the increased financial instability of county residents during the pandemic.
- MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZ. Maricopa County's Recovery Plan includes \$30 million for a new affordable housing development that will primarily serve populations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- OLMSTED COUNTY, MINN. Olmsted County will create and preserve more than 1,100 affordable housing units by investing \$16.1 million to address longstanding affordable housing needs

exacerbated by the pandemic. Of those funds, \$10 million is allocated to a five-year investment project that will create and preserve the affordable housing units, \$5 million to create affordable homeownership opportunities, \$1 million to purchase a building for transitional housing and \$100,000 for repairs to the county's warming center which will help those in need stay out of the cold.

- BUNCOMBE COUNTY, N.C. Buncombe County was able to establish a new and permanent supportive housing expansion program – the Homeward Bound Permanent Supportive Housing Program – with a \$3 million investment made possible by the Recovery Fund. The program serves the community's most vulnerable individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and provides supports including rental assistance and case management, both of which are encouraged by Treasury.
- C. Crucial investments to prevent and end homelessness, including support of the Regional Coordinated Access Network (CAN), emergency rental assistance, outreach, and Community Health Works to connect people experiencing homelessness to health services, benefits, and supports.**
- Eligibility Categories: 2.2 Household Assistance: Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Aid; 2.16 Housing Support: Services for Unhoused Persons; 2.17; 2.18

Examples from Other Jurisdiction's SLFRF Recovery Plans Submitted to Treasury:

- HONOLULU CITY & COUNTY, HAWAII: Honolulu City & County's Recovery Plan includes \$900,000 for programs that assess properties for the acquisition, development and use of affordable housing or shelters.
- BOULDER COUNTY, COLO. Boulder County is investing \$120,000 in Recovery Funds towards the county's Emergency Choice Housing Vouchers to support households that experienced a negative economic impact because of the pandemic. The county will also support wraparound services for homeless individuals with a \$21,600 investment, in addition to setting aside \$750,000 to help fund Family Resource Centers which provide housing assistance to populations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

**II. Community and Mental Health Services to High Risk Middle and High School Youth Disproportionately Impacted by COVID 19. Some of the items below may be able to be funded through dollars that go directly to the BOE but I wanted to include them here as well.**

- a. School based mental health services: EC 2.26: Addressing Educational Disparities: Mental Health Services
- b. Community Violence Intervention Program: EC 1.11 Community Violence Intervention

**III. Increased Community Planning and Community Based Services for Populations and Neighborhoods Disproportionately Impacted by COVID**

- a. Funding for capital improvements for neighborhood based community service center such as the Keefe Community Center and services for Hamden's senior's
- b. Undertake a planning process (like a charrette) to establish an overall vision and plan for the Southern Dixwell Avenue corridor and the Highwood and Mather/Dixwell opportunity areas and include residents, businesses, CT-DOT, and other community stakeholders in the process. (This recommendation was taken from Hamden's 2019 Plan of Conservation and Development.)