

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING



Connecticut
Department of
HOUSING

At a Glance

Seila Mosquera-Bruno, *Commissioner*

Brandon McGee, *Deputy Commissioner*

Shante Hanks, *Special Advisor to the 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* – 66 and 1 Crumbling Foundations Homeowner Advocate who is funded through the state's Insurance Fund. Additionally, there are 3 more full-time staff members who are funded by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority dedicated to supporting Connecticut's Coordinated Access Network (CAN) system.**

***Recurring operating expenses* - \$29,759,171.29**

***Organizational structure* – Office of the Commissioner, Finance and Operations, Legal, Individual & Family Support, Housing and Community Development, Architectural & Technical Services, Policy Research and Housing Support, National Disaster Resilience/Rebuild by Design and CDBG-DR Superstorm Sandy, UniteCT**

Mission

The mission of the Department of Housing (DOH) is to ensure everyone has access to quality housing opportunities and options throughout the State of Connecticut.

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

Established July 1, 2013, DOH is a consolidation of housing and community development programs and staff from multiple state agencies and is the lead agency for all housing matters in Connecticut. With all housing programs within one agency, the Department is able to provide leadership on the state's housing policy goals.

The Department is dedicated to assisting individuals with their housing needs. DOH's Individual & Family Support unit manages a must-answer information and referral line for state residents seeking assistance from one of the Department's support programs or with their unique housing problems. DOH's programs cover the full spectrum of housing options in Connecticut; allowing individuals to access emergency shelter when necessary, and attain permanent supportive housing, affordable rental housing, or affordable homeownership.

DOH engages in 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 information on the agency's policies and programs. In addition, the DOH Commissioner continues to collaborate with local municipal and housing leaders to discuss ways in which the Department's 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, as well as for-profit and non-profit housing developers to meet with Department leadership and staff to discuss their housing issues and needs.

In addition, the agency funds a rental housing locator service, which is free to the public, as well as provides leadership in implementing the coordinated access system statewide, which offers comprehensive assessments and referral services to meet the housing needs of vulnerable individuals and families. DOH also provides an online opportunity mapping tool that allows visitors to assess neighborhood statistics in each of Connecticut's federal census tracts.

Improvements/Achievements for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Office of the Commissioner

- Fully implemented “Head Start on Housing”. Head Start on Housing is a partnership between the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, Connecticut Department of Housing, Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office, Connecticut Head Start Association, and the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare.
- Chaired the Governor Lamont’s “Connecticut Interagency Council on Homelessness”. This panel of agency heads is responsible for collaborating on a multi-agency approach that strengthen the state’s homelessness prevention and response efforts.
- Recapitalized the Time To Own loan program, a Forgivable Down Payment Assistance loan to help alleviate potential homebuyers' inability to cover the down payment and closing costs required to purchase their first home. Administered by CHFA on behalf of the CT Department of Housing, the Time To Own loan is available to eligible homebuyers in conjunction with a CHFA first mortgage loan. More than 4,300 homeowners were assisted under this initiative, and more are being assisted every day.
- Implemented a nonprofit capacity building initiative to providing staffing as well as training to improve the operational model of five (5) of the State’s nonprofit affordable housing developers. In addition, this initiative provided predevelopment funding to assist those organizations in creating new opportunities for affordable housing in their regions.

Housing and Community Development

- In the last year, the Department has created or preserved more than 2,800 affordable housing units. In addition, there are more than 5,100 additional units that are currently under construction, representing state investment of more than \$128,146,475, leveraging more than \$674,062,969 in private investment.
- Streamlined the Development Engagement Process, to create a pipeline of more than seventy-four (74) active projects, representing more than 3,484 units with an estimated cost of \$1.2 billion.

Policy, Research, and Housing Support

- Continues to generate permanent, supportive housing units using the federal Section 811 Project-based Rental Assistance Program. This program has been used in both existing and new construction projects. Additionally, it has housed participants of Connecticut’s Money Follows the Person program and homeless individuals from the Coordinated Access Network.
- Implemented a series of technical assistance initiatives, both directly and with the assistance of a regional consultant, aimed at guiding small to mid-sized municipalities through the implementation of their municipal affordable housing plans.

Individual and Family Support Programs

- DOH continued to provide over 15,000 rental subsidies to low-income households throughout the state through the federal Section 8 Program and the state funded Rental Assistance Payments Program. Within each of these programs, DOH has been able to expand access to rent subsidies to households with disabilities, including those with mental health, substance abuse and developmental disabilities.
- Continued its nation leading efforts to deconcentrate homeless individuals and families living in shelters. Established a series of HUB's spread across the State to improve access to homeless and other related social service programs.

National Disaster Recovery/Rebuild by Design and Superstorm Sandy

- DOH continues to wind down the use of over \$159 million of CDBG-DR funds, which were used to assist homeowners, municipalities, and small businesses in their recovery from the damages of Superstorm Sandy. DOH is wrapping up the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program in a manner that protects homeowners, taxpayers, and the State from fraud, waste, and abuse.
- DOH continues to make significant progress under the National Disaster Recovery/Rebuild by Design activities. These activities, centered in Bridgeport, continue to move toward completion, in cooperation with the City and other related partners, to make this area of the state more resilient to climate change.

Legal Unit

- Increased efficiency and effectiveness of the outside counsel process, including collaborating with the Office of the Attorney General for new legal partners.
- Responded to a higher than normal volume of citizen inquiries seeking guidance on eviction moratoria, landlord-tenant issues, and general housing related guidance.
- Entered into numerous Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement with other state agencies to facilitate and ensure attainment of the state's housing policy goals.
- Trained all staff in state ethics, continued to provide ethics advice to staff on an as-needed basis.

UniteCT

Under the federal Emergency Rental Assistance program, provided through both the federal CARES ACT and the AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT 2021, DOH implemented the UniteCT Program, which is administered on behalf of the US Treasury. Funded under a complex set of rules and guidelines, both ERA1 and ERA2 funding have been used by the Department to assist eligible tenant households:

- The Eviction Prevention Fund, launched in January 2023, provides rental arrearage assistance in order for tenants being evicted to remain in their unit. As of June 30th, 2024, the program has supported 6,085 households and provided a total of over \$34.9 million in assistance.
- The Workforce Rental Assistance Program, launched in June 2023, provides rental assistance to individuals and families participating in the Office of Workforce Strategy's CareerConnect training program. As of June 30th, 2024, the program has supported 624 households and provided a total of over \$2.3 million in assistance.
- The Moving Assistance Program, launched in June 2023, provides security deposit assistance to individuals recently evicted who have found a new landlord. As of June 30th, 2024, the program has supported 2034 households and provided a total of over \$6.8 million in assistance.