



February 2, 2022

Dear Governor Lamont and Honorable Legislative Representatives:

We are a coalition of community organizations, nonprofits, funding partners, neighbors and residents of Eastern CT who have been working together to ensure that American Rescue Plan Act funding is committed to equitable, transformational change in our community. Our research and expert knowledge have proven that investing in mental health and wellness, childcare and early childhood education, and affordable housing can lift those on the lowest end of the economic spectrum and create truly healthy, thriving communities.

We are writing today with three specific requests to ensure that your budget presentation addresses serious investments in mental health, wellness and well-being:

1. **Support and grow mental health workforce** – mental health workers are fleeing the field and not being replaced. It is critical to subsidize their education and provide wages, benefits and subsidies that recognize their important contribution so that providers can recruit and retain them.
2. **Support all individuals throughout their lifespan** – Families, children, youth, the elderly and people across the spectrum and ability level are isolated and experiencing mental health concerns including depression, anxiety, and trauma. It is critical to provide funding for existing support structures and provide deeper funding to build in-home outreach and intervention services.
3. **Redesign the crisis response system** to provide mental health response by experts in concert with law enforcement, including investing in training, strategic recruitment, and support for first responders.

ARPA funds were intended to invest in our democracy by helping build equitable transformation. We need to strengthen our human infrastructure so that all have the capacity to achieve their full potential and promise.

All of us stand together in advocating for these investments and are committed as partners to ensure we succeed.

Sincerely yours,

David Addams, **William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund**
Maryam Elahi, **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut**
Allison Blake, **Child & Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut**
Gian-Carl Casa, **The Alliance**
Gino DeMaio, **Sound Community Services, Inc.**
Marvin Elbaum, **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Southeastern CT**
Angela Fournier, **Town of Windham Human Services**
Jennifer Granger, **United Community & Family Services**
Shiela Hayes, **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Norwich Branch**
Kathleen Krider, **Access Community Action Agency**
Diane Manning, **United Services, Inc.**
Patrick McCormack, **Uncas Health District**
Jeanne Milstein, **City of New London Human Services**
Regina Moller, **Noank Community Support Services (NCSS)**
Deb Monahan, **Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA)**
Bill and Terri Pearsall, **NAMI Windham County**
Luis Perez, **Mental Health Connecticut**
Susan Radway, **Riverfront Children's Center**
Kim Silcox, **Nonprofit Alliance of Northeastern Connecticut**
Arvind Shaw, **Generations Family Health Center**
Kathleen Stauffer, **The Arc of Eastern Connecticut**
Rachel Tambling, **LMFT**
Katherine Verano, **Safe Futures**
Joan Wessell, **Senior Resources Agency on Aging**
Zakkyia Williams, **Yale New Haven Health/L+M Hospital**
Catherine Zall, **New London Homeless Hospitality Center**
Joseph Zuzel, **Hartford HealthCare/Backus Hospital/Windham Hospital**