

# THE FACE OF NONPROFITS IN CONNECTICUT

Every day, nonprofit organizations work to improve Connecticut communities. Nonprofits work hard to end homelessness, eradicate poverty, care for abandoned children, and to strengthen the overall social fabric and improve the quality of life for all people in Connecticut. Nonprofits provide social services to people of all walks of life: keeping families together; giving kids positive alternatives to bad things; helping people with developmental disabilities live independent and productive lives in the community; providing shelter to men, women and children; and delivering food to the elderly and the disabled.

Connecticut nonprofits are continually engaged in the effort to build more livable, workable communities: protecting the environment for future generations; providing exposure to the arts, music, theater and dance; preserving our rich history in institutions such as museums and libraries; and creating avenues for people from diverse backgrounds to come together and work for common goals.



***“My baby lost one parent.  
Thanks to Crossroads, she  
hasn’t lost the other one.”***

*Margarita Padilla,  
speaking about her daughter,  
Jasmine, 4 months.  
Crossroads, New Haven*

Not only does the nonprofit sector meet critical community needs, it also plays an integral role in our economy. In 2000, reporting nonprofits in Connecticut comprised 8.7% of the Gross Domestic Product in Connecticut. As a sector, nonprofit organizations employed 156,880 people, approximately 9.4% of the state’s labor force. The people employed by Connecticut nonprofits earn, save and spend \$5 billion annually in wages.

While nonprofit employees contribute to the state in both social and economic terms, the valuable work they do is not adequately funded. Prior to the current budget reductions, Connecticut’s nonprofits were in a financial crisis. As a result of scarce funding at both the state and federal level, nonprofit costs have grown at far greater pace than revenues. Health, liability and workers compensation insurance costs have risen by approximately 40%, while funding has remained flat or in some cases been reduced. At many nonprofits recruiting and retaining qualified employees is increasingly difficult—for example, nonprofit social service organizations pay far less than their employers in other sectors – 44% less than their state government counterparts.

***“They gave me my  
self-esteem and  
self-confidence back.  
I was able to function  
in society.”***

*- Susan Serbek  
Hartford House, Hartford*

**Nonprofits and the State: Partners working for the people of Connecticut**

***“We give kids that are getting in trouble a second chance to do the right thing instead of hanging with the wrong crowd. Without it, a lot of kids wouldn’t get that second chance, they’d be locked up in jail.”***

*- Raynell Lindsey,  
community service coordinator,  
Community Partners in Action  
Action, Manchester*

Out of a sense of purpose and dedication, nonprofit providers have struggled to maintain and deliver vital services as funding dollars shrink. The current state budget deficit threatens the integrity of Connecticut’s nonprofit network. Further cuts to nonprofits will hurt all of our communities, particularly our most vulnerable citizens; agencies will be forced to layoff their employees and in some cases shut down; services will disappear; and people in need will be turned away.

In the midst of our state budget crisis, the nonprofit sector faces uncertainty and immense challenges. More is expected; more is needed; and fewer dollars are available. The partnership between the nonprofit

sector, state government, the business community, and local leaders must be strengthened to ensure that the people of Connecticut receive the services and resources they need.

Connecticut’s citizens place their trust in the responsiveness, performance and quality of services that nonprofits provide. That covenant of trust must not be broken. Imagine if all nonprofits shut down for a day. Homeless people would be out on the street in the frigid cold of winter. No one would be available to provide relief to families in time of an emergency when misfortune strikes. A suicidal individual could not seek emergency counseling services. An abused women could not find safety in a crisis center. An at-risk youth, with nowhere to go, could take that wrong turn....the list goes on and on.

***“I had to surrender my pride and go into a shelter. MANNA helped give my daughter a place to rest her head. Nobody’s too far off from being in my situation.”***

*- Aleta Alston, Center City Churches  
MANNA Program, Hartford*

The survival and stability of nonprofit programs are essential to our citizens, our communities and our state. We ask state decision-makers to take the time to understand the short- and long-term ramifications of cutting and eliminating nonprofit programs and services as the solution to balancing the state budget. We urge nonprofits, the business community, local leaders and state government to keep the partnership whole.

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