

The Connecticut General Assembly



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FAIRFIELD DELEGATION MEMBERS SECURE \$1.5M BOND REQUEST ON AGENDA FOR OPERATION HOPE OF FAIRFIELD

(HARTFORD, CT) – **State Representatives Jennifer Leeper (D-Fairfield, Southport), Cristin McCarthy Vahey (D-Fairfield) and Laura Devlin (R-Fairfield, Trumbull), and State Senator Tony Hwang (R-Easton, Fairfield, Newtown, Weston, Westport)** announced today that the \$1.25 million state bonding request for the purchase and renovation of a new Operation Hope facility in Fairfield has been placed on the state's bonding commission's agenda by the Governor.

Rep. Leeper said, "I am proud to live in and work for a community that rallies together for a common cause and the greater good. This request for Operation Hope has been a bipartisan effort among my legislative colleagues and me to provide assistance to a selfless organization that continually assists our community during their greatest moments of need. With the prospective funds, Operation Hope will have the capability to remain here in Fairfield, serving even more families in need."

"Operation Hope is a critical resource for community members in need of food, supportive housing and social work services," said **Rep. McCarthy Vahey**. "I am both happy and proud to support the state's investment in an organization that works alongside our community to empower those in need."

"What a welcome early Holiday present; Operation Hope does so much for our community. During the pandemic, we have seen an uptick in food and housing insecurity and this state money will permit Operation Hope to serve more families in Fairfield," said **Rep. Devlin**. "I want to thank the rest of the Fairfield legislative delegation for their advocacy and Governor Lamont for the bond request approval. We are all very grateful."

Sen. Tony Hwang, who serves as the ranking senator on the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee's bonding subcommittee, said, "In placing Operation Hope on the next State Bond Commission Agenda, I am thrilled that my colleagues continue to consider investing in an agency which in turn invests its heart, soul, and limited financial means into supporting those members of our community who truly need it most. Home security and food security are vital components to every person's life. This funding for Operation Hope will support their worthy mission to end hunger, combat homelessness and provide mortgage foreclosure counseling."

Governor Ned Lamont said, "Operation Hope provides an invaluable service to those in need in Fairfield and throughout the region, and I am glad that we could partner with the organization on the release of this state funding and support its continued operations."

"Operation Hope has been serving the vulnerable residents of Fairfield, Bridgeport and across our region for over 35 years. We have been instrumental in leading the way for collaboration across Fairfield County and are focused on ending homelessness and hunger – one person at a time. To continue to be present for those in need of food, housing and clinical support, we need a base of operation that is safe, accessible and able to move us into the future. Our current situation is tentative and unable to meet our needs. This funding will stabilize our operation and allow us to help our neighbors not only solve their crises, but build skills and access opportunities to truly thrive. We are grateful to our local delegation – Representative Jennifer Leeper, Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Representative Laura Devlin and Senator Tony Hwang – for working together to strengthen our community. The State's investment in our efforts will lead to greater outcome for those in need," said **Executive Director of Operation Hope CT, Carla Miklos**.

If approved next week, the \$1.5 million bonding request will provide the needed funds to purchase and renovate a property for Operation Hope to consolidate its programs into one facility. The new location will include its homeless resource center, community kitchen, food pantry, affordable housing, housing first, case management and counseling programs. This facility will provide a long-term solution to Operation Hope's needs, allowing them to continue serving over 2,000 individuals and families each year. The estimated total cost of the project is \$4 million.

While not officially approved, most bonding requests that appear on the Commission's Agenda are approved. Their upcoming meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 21, 2021.

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