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**SE CT Funders and Nonprofits Partner to Launch
Employment Initiative for Homeless Families**

NORWICH, CT— An innovative, collaborative initiative to end family homelessness in southeastern Connecticut was launched today at a press conference hosted by the Southeastern Connecticut Funders Collaborative. Dubbed “INTERSECT” (Integrated Network to Employment and Re-Housing of Southeastern Connecticut), the initiative is designed to provide employment supports for families transitioning out of homelessness via the region’s rapid re-housing program. It is one of five regional collaboratives that are planning and implementing two-year pilots of Secure Jobs CT across the state.

Led by Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA), INTERSECT comprises an array of nonprofit and public sector partners that includes the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, the Economic Security Workgroup of the Partnership to End Homelessness in SE CT, Mystic Area Shelter and Hospitality, Norwich Human Services, the Southeastern Mental Health Authority, United Way of SE CT, Thames River Community Service, and the CT Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.

INTERSECT is made possible by \$35,000 in grants from members of the Southeastern Connecticut Funders Collaborative. Led by the Liberty Bank Foundation, the participating funders include the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Dime Bank Foundation, Dominion Resources, and the Edward and Mary Lord Foundation. The Melville Charitable Trust, which is leading the development of Secure Jobs CT, has provided \$35,000 in matching funds to INTERSECT, for a total of \$70,000 for the first year of the pilot.

“We’ve come together to fund INTERSECT because their plan aligns all the different resources families need to stay housed,” said Sue Murphy, executive director of the Liberty Bank Foundation. “It makes connections between systems that haven’t previously worked together, and leverages them to enable parents to earn an income that will sustain their families over the long term. This isn’t a band-aid. It’s a solution.”

INTERSECT will implement state-of-the-art solutions to end homelessness by connecting homeless families to housing and to education, training, and support programs that are designed to

increase family income through stable, competitive employment. The initiative is projected to help 30 families in Southeastern Connecticut during each year of the pilot.

“It’s not enough just to re-house a homeless family, even with several months of ongoing supports,” said Lisa Shippee of TVCCA, the INTERSECT team leader. “For many of these families, unemployment or underemployment was a key cause of their homelessness. Our goal is to provide them with whatever they need to get and keep a job that will provide them with enough income to sustain them and prevent them from returning to homelessness.” She noted that this will require a much closer degree of coordination between agencies involved with housing, workforce, child care, education, and transportation—coordination that the INTERSECT partnership is designed to facilitate.

One key component of INTERSECT’s plan is a part-time Employment Navigator that will work with housing providers to coordinate employment-related services for families being re-housed. The navigator will assess each family’s need and connect them with the appropriate supports, whether that is as simple as the development of a resume and interviewing skills, or as complex as career-related education or English language instruction. In addition, some flexible funds are available for job-related expenses—such as payment for a car repair, the first month of child care, uniforms, or licenses—that may pose barriers to employment.

“INTERSECT and the other Secure Jobs Connecticut partnerships will draw new attention within the workforce system to the needs of parents who are eager to secure full-time employment, but who face multiple barriers. It is our hope that the results of this program will inform much-needed adjustments in employment and housing programs to better serve homeless job seekers in the future,” said Janice Elliott, Executive Director of the Melville Charitable Trust. She noted that Melville and more than two dozen other funders around the state have awarded \$500,000 in grants to support the Secure Jobs CT pilot, with an additional \$200,000 in funding from the Connecticut Department of Housing.

The **Secure Jobs Connecticut** initiative, of which INTERSECT is a part, enables families to make ends meet and avoid returning to homelessness by supplementing rapid re-housing efforts with the opportunity for a steady income. Launched in July 2015 in five regions throughout the state, this program coordinates the efforts of providers and funders of housing, workforce, transportation, and child care services. Additionally, regional grantees are assisted by the Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund and the Partnership for Strong Communities, which works with the state’s housing, labor and service agencies to address policy barriers on a larger scale.

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INTERSECT FUNDING PARTNERS

Total Awarded: \$70,000

Southeastern Connecticut Funders Collaborative:

- Liberty Bank Foundation – \$12,500
- Community Foundation of Eastern CT – \$10,000
- Dime Bank Foundation – \$5,000
- Edward and Mary Lord Foundation – \$5,000
- Dominion –\$2,500

Melville Charitable Trust - \$35,000 in matching funds

