



# Public Engagement Newsletter

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[COVERING JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER]

## Hello Friends –

*It's an exciting time to work in the field of health care and human services. Not only does the Affordable Care Act (ACA) expand health coverage to help improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans, but it is also a defining time for generations to come, and you get to be a part of it!*

*While most of you have heard a lot about the ACA recently, many questions remain unanswered. In this special issue of our Public Engagement Newsletter, we want to share with you some key points about health care reform and showcase [Get Covered Illinois](#), the state's online platform for uninsured residents.*



*With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, there are also a lot of changes happening at the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). As you read further, you will hear about the IDHS' new Integrated Eligibility System (IES); become familiar with the Department's new customer Application for Benefits Eligibility portal for Medicaid, SNAP, and cash assistance – ABE for short; and find out more about the new ABE Customer Call Center.*

*We want to thank our sister agencies, staff and allies who have partnered with us – both formally and informally – to prepare for the open enrollment period, which began last week. We also want to acknowledge and give a special “thank you” to our staff from the Family Community Resource Centers who have been making time to learn new eligibility policies and attend training on the new systems, all in the midst of serving our customers day-to-day.*

*As we embark on these exciting changes, we recognize that updating our system to accommodate the ACA will be challenging at first. But please do not worry. We believe our staff is our greatest asset and fully capable of meeting these challenges head on and finding solutions, quickly. To help us succeed, we have devoted extensive resources to training and support to help our staff transition and ensure the best outcome throughout this landmark expansion.*

*If you have occasion to work with our staff as we make this monumental transition, we hope you will “pardon our dust.” In the meantime, the talented staff at the Illinois Department of Human Services – with the support of our community partners – are striving to seize this opportunity to spread our culture of coverage, which is something we can all be proud of!*

*As always, we are committed to partnering with you to serve the individuals, families, and communities who need us now more than ever. Enjoy!*



## State of Illinois launches Get Covered Illinois

Last week Governor Pat Quinn launched *Get Covered Illinois*, the state's comprehensive education and enrollment online platform for uninsured residents to sign up for health coverage under the Federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). Last week's announcement is part of Governor Quinn's commitment to improve the health and well-being of the people of Illinois.

"We are launching a new state of health care for more than one million of our uninsured relatives, loved ones, friends and neighbors," Governor Quinn said. "*Get Covered Illinois* – the state's new health insurance Marketplace – will make health care more affordable than ever for those who need it. While there may be bumps along the way, this is a turning point in our nation and the state as we strive to provide decent healthcare to all."

[GetCoveredIllinois.gov](http://GetCoveredIllinois.gov) is the official website marketplace where individuals, families and small business owners can get connected to their new health insurance options with coverage starting January 1, 2014. The state is working with community groups in every corner of the state to provide direct enrollment assistance.

*Get Covered Illinois* will be robust with eight major companies that are participating:

- Aetna Life Insurance Company
- Coventry Health and Life Insurance Company
- Coventry Health Care of Illinois, Inc.
- Health Alliance Medical Plans, Inc.
- Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company (Blue Cross)
- Humana Health Plan, Inc.
- Humana Insurance Company
- Land of Lincoln Mutual Health Insurance Company



"Illinois is excited and proud to launch the most ambitious wellness initiative in our state's history," Deputy Governor Cristal Thomas said. "This will require a massive education and sign-up effort, and we are committed to working with our partners across the state to ensure that all of those who are eligible know about their options and are able to select a health plan that meets their needs."

All Marketplace plans cover important health benefits, including doctor visits, hospital stays, maternity care, emergency room visits, mental health services, chronic disease management, prescriptions and more. No one will be denied coverage because they are sick or have a pre-existing condition like asthma, diabetes or cancer. Preventive care will be covered at no cost to the patient. Individuals and families with income of up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level - \$45,000 for individuals and \$95,000 for a family of four - will receive subsidies on a sliding scale if they obtain coverage through the Marketplace.

"Illinois' health insurance plan rates are lower than many other states and 25 percent lower than earlier predictions," Illinois Department of Insurance Director Andrew Boron said. "Most people will also get help paying for their plan and many will be eligible for low-cost or free health coverage."

"This is an exciting day for the people of Illinois," *Get Covered Illinois* Director Jennifer Koehler said. "We are now on the cusp of achieving an historic advance in the health and well-being of our state." *Get Covered Illinois* is for any Illinois resident who had insurance, lost it and wants it again; residents who could never afford or obtain insurance before; or for those who have never attempted to get insurance but now must comply with the law.

From October 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014, officials hope to enroll at least 300,000 in the Marketplace. Enrollment can take place online; with the help of a trained specialist over the phone by calling the *Get Covered Illinois* Help Desk at 1 (866) 311-1119; or in person at a state community partner agency with trained navigators to assist. The website also features community partner locations by zip code.

[GetCoveredIllinois.gov](http://GetCoveredIllinois.gov) includes a screening tool that asks users several simple questions about their income and family size and then directs them either to the Marketplace or to ABE (ABE.Illinois.gov) – the state's new smart online application system where consumers can apply directly for Medicaid, nutrition and income assistance.

The *Get Covered Illinois* Help Desk will provide support to Illinois consumers by answering basic questions about the Illinois Health Insurance Marketplace, including questions about general eligibility for Marketplace plans and exemptions from the individual responsibility provision, how tax credits and cost-sharing reductions work and how to find someone who can provide personal assistance.

For more information, go to [www.getcoveredillinois.gov](http://www.getcoveredillinois.gov).

### **ACA guarantees 10 essential health benefits**

Although no one plans to get sick or hurt, most people need to see a doctor or visit a hospital to get treated for an illness or injury at some point throughout their life. For Illinois residents, there's help: Get Covered Illinois!

Beginning October 1, 2013, Illinois residents can apply, compare and shop for comprehensive medical coverage online by visiting the state's new official health insurance marketplace at [www.getcoveredillinois.gov](http://www.getcoveredillinois.gov). The plans that are offered in the Marketplace include 10 essential health benefit categories that are usually included in typical employer plans today. Having these essential benefits insurance plans will help to protect people by providing health coverage when they get sick or hurt and need it most.

The 10 essential health benefit categories are:

- Outpatient services - done at medical centers that don't require you to stay overnight;
- Emergency services - to keep you from getting worse;
- Hospitalizations - cover hospital stays for more than one day;
- Maternity and newborn care - during pregnancy and after your baby is delivered, including help with breastfeeding;
- Mental health and substance use disorder services - to improve your mental well-being or treat a mental illness;
- Prescription drugs - that require a prescription from your doctor;
- Rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices - used during physical therapy to help you recover skills that you lost because you were hurt or disabled, or helps you develop and maintain skills you need;
- Preventive wellness and chronic disease management - to help you stay healthy, and services to improve your quality of life by preventing or lowering the effect of a disease. This includes check-ups, screenings, monitoring and educating you about your treatment;
- Laboratory services - to diagnose an illness or determine whether or not your treatment worked; and
- Dental and vision services for children.



### **New Integrated Eligibility System - IES**



Hopefully by now you've heard that the Illinois Department of Human Services has launched a new benefits eligibility system and a new web application for customers starting October 1<sup>st</sup>. The new Integrated Eligibility System (IES) will replace many of the computer systems currently used to manage cases and determine eligibility for Medicaid, SNAP and cash benefits. The IES has many new features to assist caseworkers including budget calculation tools; electronic document management; and electronic validation of application information such as birthdates, wages, citizenship, and social security numbers.

### **Say hello to ABE!**

The Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE) is a new self-service website for customers to apply for benefits and eventually monitor their cases. ABE will replace both the IDHS web application and the All Kids online application. ABE is part of the overall IES implementation. You can visit ABE at [www.abe.illinois.gov](http://www.abe.illinois.gov)



## SNAP recipients receive “Express Enrollment”

As we begin implementing the Affordable Care Act and process applications from people who are included in the new Medicaid eligibility groups, the IDHS is doing everything possible to help customers access health coverage and ease the burden of increased caseloads on offices and caseworkers. This newly eligible population is referred to as ACA Adults.

One strategy the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) will use to manage the influx of applications is to offer some customers a streamlined application procedure and process their Medicaid enrollment centrally. The federal government has granted the state a waiver to use a simplified express enrollment process for current SNAP customers who are members of the new ACA Adult Medicaid eligibility group without performing a full eligibility determination.



A short-form Medicaid application along with a notice regarding new Medicaid eligibility requirements were sent to targeted SNAP customers in late August. When the customer mails back the signed form, a caseworker at a designated central unit will perform a simplified eligibility determination in IES and add Medicaid to their SNAP case. Once completed, customers will receive an enrollment notice and a medical card.

However, as part of the authority granted by the federal government, the state will have to do a full eligibility determination no later than the point of the annual Medicaid redetermination. That means the ACA Adults that were enrolled based on their receipt of SNAP will have to submit income and household information for ongoing eligibility determination 12 months after they are enrolled.

Caseworkers will process these redeterminations just like any other Medicaid case.

To be eligible for SNAP, an individual's income must be below 130% of the federal poverty level. The new Medicaid income eligibility limit is higher - at 138% of the poverty level. A person receiving SNAP will always have income below 138% of poverty and will be financially eligible for Medicaid.

The federal government understands the goal of enrolling as many uninsured individuals as possible in health coverage by January 1, 2014. To do this, they have offered states a number of strategies to simplify enrollment for individuals that are virtually certain to be eligible for Medicaid using new Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) rules, including SNAP Express Enroll. While IDHS has already received over 40,000 signed applications, enrollment is expected to reach up to 120,000 ACA Adults using the Express Enrollment strategy.

## New call center accepts applications via phone

As part of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is now accepting benefits applications over the phone. By calling the IDHS Help Line at 1 (800) 843-6154, individuals will be directed to the ABE Customer Call Center (ABE CCC) and can sign up for services.

Approximately 100 IDHS clerical staff, caseworkers and managers will be housed at the ABE CCC and receive the same training as all other IDHS local office staff. Furthermore, call center staff will receive supplemental training on call center specifics, the new IES system, MAGI policy, plus Cisco Telephone System and “soft skill” training. Since many staff members are new to casework, they will also receive in-depth policy training.

The ACA requires the state to take Medicaid applications over the phone, but in order to best serve our customers, the ABE CCC will take both Medicaid and SNAP applications by phone. Applicants will be able to telephonically sign their application so the process will be complete at the end of the call. The ABE CCC will not accept applications for cash assistance at this time; these customers will be sent directly to the online application ABE or their local Family Community Resource Center.



Furthermore, staff at the ABE CCC will be able to answer questions about the application process, assist individuals apply for benefits, and help individuals access or use ABE. The ABE CCC is staffed with caseworkers who can also take case changes. In the beginning, case changes will be limited to address changes, but the types of case changes the ABE CCC can assist with will expand over time.

To reduce confusion about which number to call, the IDHS Help Line 1 (800) 843-6154 remains the central access point for all IDHS programs and services. Callers with questions can quickly choose options for assistance with Medicaid, SNAP, or cash assistance from the Help Line menu options. Extra capacity has been added to the Help Line to help handle the increased volume of calls.

The ABE CCC's hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## **OTHER HAPPENINGS AT THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

### **IDHS celebrates the 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the American with Disability Act**

In honor of the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the historic signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) sponsored a special event in July at the James R. Thompson Center showcasing Illinois' continued commitment to persons with disabilities.

"We're committed to keeping the promise of equality and continuing to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities in the state of Illinois," said IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler. "During fiscal year 2013, the IDHS Division of Rehabilitation Services helped more than 5,000 individuals enter the workforce and live independently."

Governor Pat Quinn also proclaimed July 16, 2013, as Americans with Disabilities Act Day in Illinois and encouraged all citizens to reaffirm the principles of equality and inclusion by ensuring that people with disabilities are included in the mainstream community life.



This year's celebration, "*ADA Breaking Down the Barriers*," highlighted the talents and accomplishments of people with disabilities through art and interactive exhibits, entertainment provided by performers with disabilities, workshops and a three-on-three wheelchair basketball exhibition. In partnership with the Illinois Department of

Employment Security and the IDHS' Division of Rehabilitation Services, the celebration also included a job fair for persons with disabilities.

The "*ADA Breaking Down the Barriers*" celebration encourages the state and persons with disabilities to work together in the same spirit that accompanied the original enactment of this law. This celebration highlights the contributions of persons with disabilities in Illinois, as well as their everyday challenges and successes. It also serves as a reminder to every citizen of the importance of civil rights protections for Illinois residents and facilitates broader awareness about an inclusive society.

For the last 23 years, IDHS has joined with a coalition of other state agencies and councils to sponsor a statewide event commemorating the passage of the ADA, which was signed into law in 1990. The celebration not only recognizes the accomplishments of people with disabilities, it shows how state agencies, programs and other organizations have worked to implement the law. Illinois has a long standing history of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, going back more than 30 years to the passage of the Illinois Human Rights Act (December 6, 1979), which prohibits discrimination against any person with a "physical or mental disability."

For more information about IDHS programs and services for persons with disabilities, please visit [www.dhs.state.il.us](http://www.dhs.state.il.us).



## Governor Pat Quinn Signs Employment First Act

Governor Pat Quinn recently signed the “Employment First Act,” a new law which requires Illinois state agencies to work together to make employment for people with disabilities a priority.

The legislation was first proposed by Governor Quinn in his 2013 State of the State address and is part of his agenda to ensure all people have the opportunity to follow their dreams and reach their full potential.

“Every person in the Land of Lincoln should have the opportunity - regardless of the challenges they face - to pursue their dreams and achieve their full potential,” Governor Quinn said. “My goal is to make Illinois the nation's leading employer of people with disabilities. We've made historic progress to change Illinois through our Rebalancing Initiative and today, we are breaking down more barriers to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities in our state.”



Sponsored by State Sen. Daniel Biss (D-Skokie) and State Rep. Esther Golar (D-Chicago), House Bill 2591 requires all state agencies to work together to make competitive employment for people with disabilities a priority and establish measurable goals and objectives for the state. The law requires the Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities Task Force (EEOPWD) - created in 2009 - to monitor progress towards this mission. All state agencies will be required to share data and information and ensure all policies, procedures and practices are aligned to these goals and objectives. The EEOPWD Task Force includes advocates, individuals with disabilities, business community members, disability services providers, representatives of state agencies and other stakeholders.

“The Employment First Act will go a long way toward aligning state policy with Illinois' values of inclusion and fair pay for people with disabilities,” Sen. Biss said. “Illinois residents with disabilities have much to contribute to our workforce, and the law signed today will maximize their opportunities to live and work with dignity.”

“People with disabilities deserve an equal opportunity to receive gainful employment,” Rep. Golar said. “This legislation will level the playing field and make sure that no one is denied employment at a state agency simply because they have a disability.”

The Employment First Act is modeled from a national movement that believes employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred option when exploring goals and a life path for people with disabilities. Competitive work in integrated settings for people with disabilities has proven to foster self-sufficiency, independent living, higher self-esteem and better integration into the community at-large.

Governor Quinn has been recognized both nationally and locally as a champion for people with disabilities. Two years ago, the governor launched his Rebalancing Initiative to improve the state's system of caring for those with disabilities and mental health challenges. The initiative has successfully moved hundreds of people with disabilities out of institutions and into community-based care.

The Arc of the United States recently named Governor Quinn the Advocacy Matters! Award recipient for 2013, which is The Arc's most prestigious honor. The award is presented annually to proven leaders who advocate and protect the civil and human rights of people with disabilities and increase resources, services and supports that promote their full inclusion and participation in the community.

“Governor Quinn is to be commended on his vision and perseverance in guaranteeing people with disabilities the chance to live their dreams,” said Tony Paulauski, executive director of The Arc of Illinois. “The Employment First initiative provides equal opportunity to achieve their potential and benefits the people of Illinois by offering a diverse workforce and unique perspective.”

The bill signing took place at the Illinois Department of Human Services' event in July, which celebrated the 23rd anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. This year's 23rd anniversary celebration, titled “ADA Breaking Down the Barriers,” highlighted the accomplishments of people with disabilities and recognized how state agencies and other organizations have worked to comply with this law, improving access to environments, programs, services and opportunities for people with disabilities.

## Working to end sexual violence

“Nothing could be more important and it is wonderful that we have connected two excellent systems of care to provide a program that helps end this terrible offense,” said Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler, as she addressed the Illinois Imagines conference in Springfield.

Secretary Saddler welcomed the more than 100 rape crisis staff, DD providers, community partners, ICASA, and the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission and praised them for working to protect our most vulnerable citizens. “We’re pleased that Illinois Imagines has received another year of funding from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW),” added Saddler.

The IDHS received a grant from the OVW to improve the systems responding to women with disabilities who experience sexual violence. The IDHS’ project, called *Illinois Imagines*, is designed to strengthen the service delivery systems so that women with disabilities who survive sexual violence will receive a proactive, individualized, compassionate response to their experience.



The project team includes key partners in the fields of disability and sexual assault, self advocates, members of various IDHS Divisions, representatives from the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA), Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council (IFVCC), Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (INCIL), and The Alliance and Blue Tower Training Center (BTT).

The four core initiatives work together to provide a comprehensive approach to systems change and promote sustainability at both the local and state levels.

- Foster collaboration among disability service agencies and rape crisis centers in Illinois communities.
- Ensure best practice response to women with disabilities who experience sexual violence by ensuring: accessibility of rape crisis centers and trauma informed response by disability agencies.
- Expand current outreach efforts to ensure that women with disabilities who experience sexual violence are aware of their rights and options.
- Examine and advocate changes to existing policies and drafting new policies that will create lasting positive changes to the service system for women with disabilities who experience sexual violence.

For additional information about the Illinois Imagines project, contact Teresa Tudor at 1 (217) 558-6192 or via email at [Teresa.tudor@illinois.gov](mailto:Teresa.tudor@illinois.gov).

## IDHS Secretary Saddler testifies before Congress on the Safety Net and Work Support Strategies

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Michele R.B. Saddler was recently joined by U.S. Congressman Danny Davis as she gave a U.S. house subcommittee a look at what Illinois is doing to improve the safety net for people in need. The House Subcommittee on [Human Resources held a hearing in August on improving the safety net](#). Witnesses described what improvements are needed to the nation's safety net programs, but more importantly, Secretary Saddler highlighted what is already being done in Illinois to better serve families.

Programs such as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) are safety net programs that can help low income working adults stay in the workforce and promote the success of children in school and later in life. However, many people can be confused by how to enroll in these programs and encounter numerous barriers when navigating these complex and bureaucratic systems.

This is why innovative efforts such as the [Work Support Strategies \(WSS\) initiative](#), are key to helping policy makers, administrators and other stakeholders improve and better serve families to get and keep the supports for which they are eligible. WSS is a multi-state effort in partnership with three national organizations, the Ford Foundation and three other philanthropic partners. WSS seeks to design, test and implement 21st century public benefits systems that would dramatically improve the delivery of work support benefits to low-income families. This involves creating and incorporating more effective, streamlined and integrated approaches to how service is delivered.

Secretary Saddler testified on the department's experiences in being at the forefront of streamlining programs to provide coordinated access to benefits programs. "We've streamlined our service delivery in Illinois. We have improved efficiencies to help people better navigate the system. We have done this in two ways. First of all, we have looked for and created efficiencies and we have also used technology," Saddler said.



The IDHS received support from the Work Support Strategies Project, funded largely by the Ford Foundation, and this gave the department a framework to review our system including the environment, IDHS policies, and business processes.

"We started with quick easy ones like establishing specialized cues and posting clear signage. We listened to our customers and staff to figure out what in our procedures could change. We also are using technology. Thanks to the 90 percent funding afforded to us by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), we are replacing actually five of our 30-year-old legacy systems with a modern integrated system that covers Medicaid, TANF and SNAP. This will allow our customers to apply online 24/7, not having to miss work or come in during our office hours. For our workers, the use of electronic cross-matches will expedite verification of eligibility factors. We have streamlined and will continue to do so," Saddler added.

The IDHS has also used current flexibility to design programs and systems that encourage work participation and streamline access. One excellent example of that is that we used the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund that was part of the stimulus plan, we used that to place 35,000 people in temporary jobs giving them not only financial support but also valuable work experience and support to our business community.

The department has also used TANF funding to increase the investment in child care, making it possible for families to work and providing valuable learning experience for children as well. The IDHS is also using a current Medicaid Waiver to conduct express enrollment of certain SNAP benefits into the new Medicaid eligibility group. This avoids conducting redundant application and verification procedures. So we do make use of the flexibility that we have, Secretary Saddler said of the safety net works. In Illinois, 10,000 cases, (10,000 families) graduate from the TANF program every year because of their increased earnings. "Clearly, our safety net provides basic needs for our families," Saddler said.

### **IDHS to renovate part of Chicago-Read Mental Health Center**

Governor Pat Quinn recently announced a capital investment of \$2.2 million for a construction project to renovate a wing at the Chicago-Read Mental Health Center. The project is part of Governor Quinn's agenda to create jobs and drive Illinois' economy forward.

"This construction project will provide more treatment space for persons with mental illness," Governor Quinn said. "Additionally, it will also employ a number of construction workers, which will help the local economy as well."

The project, administered by the Illinois Capital Development board, will involve remodeling the east half of Unit J including new partitions, floor finishes, ceilings, nurse stations, electrical, heating, ventilation, plumbing, and sprinkler system as well as an exterior fenced exercise area. The project includes six contracts:

- General remodeling work: Path Construction Company, Inc. of Arlington Heights, \$1,039,100, the lowest of six bids.
- Electrical work: Public Electric Construction Co. of Wheeling, \$415,000, the lowest of four bids.
- Plumbing work: A & H Plumbing & Heating Co. of Elk Grove Village, \$312,000.
- Ventilation work: Amber Mechanical Contractors Inc. of Alsip, \$261,800, the lowest of four bids.
- Heating and air conditioning: Ideal Heating Company of Chicago, \$171,444, the lowest of four bids.
- Asbestos abatement: High Efficiency Professional Abatement, Inc. of Chicago, \$58,600, the lowest of two bids.

"We are very pleased Governor Quinn has made this funding available," Illinois Department of Human Services Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler said. "Equally as important as creating jobs is the improvement in our capacity to serve people with mental illness."

This project is part of Governor Quinn’s \$31 billion *Illinois Jobs Now!* program, which will support more than 439,000 jobs over six years. *Illinois Jobs Now!* is the largest capital construction program in Illinois history, and is one of the largest capital construction programs in the nation.

### **Adult Redeploy Illinois receives \$7 million for expansion**

The successful Adult Redeploy Illinois (ARI) program has received a boost allowing the program to expand to additional counties. The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) was awarded a \$7 million state grant for ARI, an initiative that diverts non-violent justice involved individuals from prison into more effective community-based services.

Administered by ICJIA, ARI provides financial incentives to counties or judicial circuits to create or expand diversion programs that employ evidence-based practices and encourage the successful local supervision of eligible offenders. The results are better outcomes for offenders at a lower cost to taxpayers.

Locally designed ARI programs offer offenders a chance to avoid prison by committing to intensive supervision and services, including cognitive behavioral and trauma-informed therapy, and problem-solving drug, mental health, and veterans’ courts.

“Adult Redeploy Illinois has proven to be successful in helping non-violent justice involved individuals to get back on the right path,” said Adult Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board (ARIOB) Co-Chair Michelle R.B. Saddler, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services. “This expansion will allow more participants to get treatment for mental health and substance abuse problems along, with the other services that help avoid recidivism.”

With this funding, ARI will sustain and expand programs already serving Cook, DuPage, Jersey, Macon, Madison, McLean, St. Clair and Winnebago counties, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit. In addition, ARI will begin funding programs in the counties of Boone, Lake, Peoria, and Sangamon, as well as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit and the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, expanding outreach to a total of 15 sites covering 39 counties, including 12 county-wide programs and three judicial circuit-wide programs.

Awarded jurisdictions must agree to reduce by 25 percent the number of commitments to the Illinois Department of Corrections from a defined target population of prison-bound, non-violent offenders.

Planning grants of up to \$30,000 are currently available to county governments interested in ARI funding for local programs.

### **AmeriCorps Funds Now Available**

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Serve Illinois Commission announced that funding is available for agencies interested in administering AmeriCorps programs in the state. AmeriCorps members serve their communities by improving education and healthcare, protecting public safety, safeguarding the environment, providing disaster relief and promoting civic engagement.

“AmeriCorps is an excellent opportunity for people to commit their time and talents and give something back to their communities,” said Brandon Bodor, Executive Director of the Serve Illinois Commission. “Illinois has a strong tradition of supporting national service programs, and AmeriCorps members make a real and lasting difference in the communities in which they serve.”

The Serve Illinois Commission, part of the IDHS and the office of the Governor, administers the AmeriCorps state programs in Illinois, and is charged with enhancing and supporting community volunteerism. Serve Illinois is funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service and currently supports nearly 30 AmeriCorps programs throughout the state.

Serve Illinois will host mandatory meetings for interested parties in Belleville, Chicago, Dixon and Springfield. Proposals are due by November 22, 2013. Funded programs will begin their work in July 2014. Meeting details and information about the application process can be found at [www.Serve.Illinois.gov](http://www.Serve.Illinois.gov).



AmeriCorps members dedicate a year to helping communities meet their unmet human service, education, public safety or environmental needs. They receive a modest living allowance, student loan deferment and training. Full-time members are also eligible to receive health insurance. Members who successfully complete their service receive an educational award of up to \$5,645 to help pay for college, graduate school, vocational training or to pay off student loans.

For more information about AmeriCorps or Serve Illinois, please visit [www.Serve.Illinois.gov](http://www.Serve.Illinois.gov) or call 1 (800) 592-9896. The website is a valuable resource for Illinoisans seeking information about volunteer agencies, trainings, nonprofit resources and national service programs, including AmeriCorps. The website includes a user-friendly volunteer matching portal where you can search for a volunteer opportunity in your area.

### **IDHS celebrates Recovery Month**

Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed September as “Recovery Month” in the state of Illinois to increase awareness and understanding of mental health and substance use disorders. “Recovery Month” celebrates the continued success of many people in Illinois who have achieved recovery from alcohol and substance addiction and mental illness. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) last month celebrated with a special softball game and ice cream social in Springfield.

“I want to commend those who are in recovery and urge those who need assistance to seek it out. Treatment is effective and people can and do recover,” IDHS Secretary Michelle R.B. Saddler said. “I also want to recognize the tremendous dedication of prevention, treatment and recovery support providers across the state.”

This year’s theme, “Join the Voices for Recovery: Together on Pathways to Wellness,” highlights the many ways that people can prevent behavioral health issues, seek treatment and sustain recovery successfully. Last year, IDHS funded substance abuse treatment services for nearly 80,000 people and mental health services for approximately 140,000 people in Illinois.

The IDHS and the Chicago Department of Public Health also co-sponsored the Recovery Walk in Chicago on Saturday, September 21 at Washington Park.

For more information about “Recovery Month,” visit [www.recoverymonth.gov](http://www.recoverymonth.gov).

*We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of our Public Engagement Newsletter. As always, please feel free to forward and share our newsletter with your networks, partners, colleagues, customers, and friends.*

*Don’t forget to [register online](#) to continue receiving future issues of the Illinois Department of Human Services Public Engagement Newsletter!*

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