



Recommendations to the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness

Delivered by the Illinois Community Advisory Council on Homelessness

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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COVER: Governor Pritzker joins State and community leaders to sign HB2138, codifying the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness and the Community Advisory Council on Homelessness and the permanency of the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. In the foreground starting from left: State Representative Lindsey LaPointe, Chief Homelessness Officer, Christine Haley, Executive Director of Featherfirst Melanie Anewishkii, Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton, President of All Chicago Carolyn Ross (Council Member), State Senator Adriane Johnson, Person with Lived Experience (Featherfist) Background: Executive Director of Illinois Housing Development Authority Kristin Faust, Grace Hou (now Deputy Governor), and Executive Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, Jeff Olivet

Meet the Illinois Community Advisory Council on Homelessness

LIVED EXPERIENCE COUNCIL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



CONTACT TAMELA AT:
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Tamela Milan-Alexander

Tamela Milan-Alexander, MPPA, is the Director of Community Engagement at EverThrive Illinois. She has over 20 years of experience in maternal child health working as a peer educator, parent advocate, developmental screener and community health worker, as well as a Healthy Start case manager. Mrs. Milan-Alexander is an active advocate and collaborator to improve the lives of moms and babies, including current membership on the Illinois Task Force on Infant and Maternal Mortality Among African Americans and the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Collaborative on Child Homelessness, in addition to the Community Advisory Council. In her career, she has seen that the perspectives of people with lived experiences are critical to enacting positive change and to ultimately supporting the health of Illinois' children.

Mrs. Milan-Alexander's drive for health equity and improving systems that care for families comes from her personal experience. In 1997, Mrs. Milan-Alexander's five children were in state welfare custody. She struggled with long-standing opioid use disorder and began another high-risk pregnancy. Mrs. Milan-Alexander was able to begin a new path with the needed encouragement of her infant daughter's pediatrician and the coordinated services of a Healthy Start program. Mrs. Milan-Alexander reunited her family, moved from public housing into a townhome and completed college and a master's degree. Her personal experiences have given her deep insight into the role neighborhood factors—such as access to housing, public transportation, food, childcare and education—play in shaping each of our lives. She urges the Interagency Task Force to partner with Public Housing Authorities and private housing providers to maximize not only families' access to housing, but also the choice and respect afforded to families in housing programs.

LIVED EXPERIENCE COUNCIL MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



CONTACT OTHA AT:
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Otha Gaston

Otha Gaston has been an active advocate and collaborator to end homelessness in Illinois for the last eight years. In addition to serving on the Community Advisory Council, he holds a seat on the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) Lived Experience Commission and its Racial Equity Impact Team. He also serves on the Chicago and Cook County Flexible Housing Pool Advisory Committee and is a longtime member of the Supportive Housing Providers Association's Peer Leadership Committee. His passions for ending homelessness and restoring hope to people stem from his own past experience with homelessness.

Otha wants to help policymakers understand that housing is the solution to homelessness and that the work of funding homelessness is urgent. Otha says that people do not set out to become homeless and that people experiencing homelessness live lives as complex as anyone else's. He knows the value of programs to prevent homelessness, such as emergency rental assistance and increased access to legal representation in eviction courts and encourages the State to prioritize investing in these programs.



CONTACT SHERRI AT:
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Sherri Allen-Reeves

BACKGROUND:

Sherri is the Executive Director of Phoenix Foundation, NFP (PHX-NFP). She has passionately worked in the service of others for over 30 years and is a vocal advocate for the homeless and other disenfranchised people. In her inaugural year as Executive Director, she generated over four million dollars in program revenue to support individuals experiencing housing insecurity. Under her leadership, PHX-NFP recently opened Phoenix Rising Emergency Triage Shelter, a 75-bed non-congregant shelter for single men and women, became an Access Point for the Coordinated Entry System, providing services for 38 units of Rapid Rehousing, and partnering with Centers for Housing and Health, providing case management for forty families in Permanent Supportive Housing.

Her service includes Board Member roles for the Chicago Continuum of Care, Supportive Housing Providers Association, Legal Council for Health Justice, and the Darren B. Easterling Center for Restorative Practices. She is also a member of the Collaborative on Child Homelessness Illinois Leadership Committee, Rotary Club Chicago Southeast, and the National Alliance to End Homelessness BIPOC Collective and Leadership Council.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Family homelessness, equitable service delivery, Continuum of Care, organizational leadership



CONTACT JOHN AT:

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John Herring

BACKGROUND:

Executive Director, Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

The intersection of homelessness and disability



CONTACT JENNIFER AT:

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Jennifer Hill

BACKGROUND:

Jennifer Hill is Executive Director of the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County, a membership organization which coordinates a continuum of services and housing options for people experiencing homelessness. Before joining the Alliance in 2004, Ms. Hill was previously the founding director of a statewide supportive housing coalition in Florida, where she contributed to the creation of Miami-Dade County's 10-year plan to end homelessness. She has worked for nonprofit community development groups in Uptown Chicago, San Francisco and Oakland, CA. Ms. Hill holds a masters degree in city planning from the University of California – Berkeley.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Continuums of Care, Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), strategic planning and homelessness data



CONTACT MARLENA AT:

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Marlana Kalafut

BACKGROUND:

Marlana is the CDBG Program Manager at the Economic and Community Development Agency for the City of Kankakee, IL. Her work focuses on the development and implementation of programs and services that address the needs of Kankakee residents, especially those who are low- to moderate-income. In her role, she has worked to formalize increased collaboration and communication between the local government, local social service agencies, the Central Illinois Continuum, and other stakeholders to address homelessness in Kankakee and the wider area.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Data-driven and systems-level change and coordination, grant administration, rural homelessness



CONTACT NIYA AT:
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Niya Kelly

BACKGROUND:

Niya is the Director of State Legislative Policy, Transformation and Equity at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Her work focuses on advocacy and organizing around the Illinois' budget, public benefits, youth homelessness and housing insecurity policies. She understands that homelessness is a direct result of racism and inequities in our country and incorporates her deep understanding of systemic racism in her work.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Legislative advocacy, State budgeting, public benefits, racial equity and youth homelessness



CONTACT BRANDIE AT:
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Brandie Knazze

BACKGROUND:

A native Chicagoan, Brandie serves as the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), a role she has held since June 2021. As DFSS Commissioner, Ms. Knazze oversees the strategy, operations, budget and framework for citywide human and social-support initiatives in children services, community service centers, domestic violence, homeless services, senior services, workforce development and youth services.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Human and social services including workforce development, youth and homeless initiatives, corporate partnerships and advocacy



CONTACT EMILY AT:
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Emily Krisciunas

BACKGROUND:

Emily is the inaugural Executive Director of Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness (CFTEH), a collaborative of philanthropic partners working to address homelessness in the Chicago region. Prior to her role with CFTEH, Emily served as Deputy Policy Director in the Chicago Mayor's Office where she worked on issues related to housing and homelessness and served on the Board of Directors for Chicago's Continuum of Care. She began her career as a grant writer at Ignite. She holds a BA in English and Sociology from the University of Notre Dame and an MPA from the University of Michigan Ford School of Public Policy.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Funder education, grantmaking, public-private partnerships, policy advocacy



CONTACT RON AT:
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Ron Lund

BACKGROUND:

Ron has nearly 30 years of experience in government and nonprofit sectors. He currently serves as the Director of Mission Effectiveness and Agency Expansion at Project NOW, Inc., focusing on identifying growth opportunities and executing expansion strategies. Previously, he played a key role in expanding services to low-income and homeless populations during the pandemic. Ron is a Certified Nonprofit Professional and has been Board President of the Northwestern Illinois Continuum of Care for eight years.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Rural homelessness, engaging CoCs, homelessness across state jurisdictions



CONTACT SUSAN AT:
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Susan Reyna-Guerrero

BACKGROUND:

Susan is the Chief Executive Officer at Covenant House Illinois.

Susan is a seasoned administrator and leader with more than 30 years of social service experience, all of which have been spent in the Chicago community. Susan has dedicated her career to focusing on helping to systematically advance the issues surrounding homelessness and its resulting impact on children and youth's mental health, physical health and overall wellbeing.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Trauma informed services and practical solutions for young people in Illinois experiencing homelessness and housing instability



CONTACT EUGENE AT:
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Eugene Humphrey

BACKGROUND:

Eugene serves as the Executive Director of the Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI), where he leads the organization in its mission to provide comprehensive behavioral health services. Eugene is focused on achieving demanding performance targets, building strategic partnerships, and establishing initiatives that set industry standards, all within a stable business environment. His professional interests center on developing effective strategies that yield high-quality outcomes for programs supporting children, adults, and families facing both physical and behavioral health challenges. Eugene's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for service recipients is evident in his dedication to evidence-based health outcomes and collaboration with stakeholders across the healthcare ecosystem.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Integrating mental health services with housing initiatives to create a comprehensive homelessness support network.



CONTACT JOSE AT:
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Jose M. Muñoz

BACKGROUND:

Jose is the CEO of La Casa Norte, a leading organization in Chicago focused on serving youth and families facing homelessness. With over two decades of experience in the nonprofit and civic sector, he has championed initiatives addressing housing instability, youth empowerment, education, health, and safety. His leadership is deeply informed by his lived experience with homelessness, driving his commitment to creating impactful, sustainable change for vulnerable communities.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Homelessness prevention and affordable housing solutions, youth empowerment, education, health and community initiatives, non-profit management and organizational strategy



CONTACT APRIL AT:
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April Redzic

BACKGROUND:

April became President & CEO of DuPage Pads in 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Now in its 40th year, DuPage Pads' mission is to end homelessness, through street outreach, shelter provision, supportive housing, rapid rehousing, career services, and educational programming for children in shelter. April has been changing lives through social services for more than 20 years, and early in her career, founded the St. Sylvester literacy program for children in shelter. Today, she is spearheading Pads' pioneering model of interim housing at the state's first hotel-to-shelter conversion and also oversaw the start of DuPage County's first rapid rehousing program for domestic violence survivors.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Family & individual homelessness, medical respite, housing as an indicator of health, supportive housing, rapid rehousing, homeless students, new models of shelter provision



CONTACT CAROLYN AT:
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Carolyn Ross

BACKGROUND:

Carolyn is the President & CEO, All Chicago Making Homelessness History. All Chicago serves as the lead agency for the Chicago Continuum of Care, collaborating with more than 100 agency partners working to prevent and end homelessness in Chicago. She has years of experience working in the field of human services, homelessness prevention, behavioral health, child welfare and criminal justice. She has developed and implemented programs including prevention and intervention services for youth and families; prevention and Substance Use Disorder treatment for youth and adults; criminal justice diversion programs; and strategies to help build community capacity.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Preventing and ending homelessness, systems-level change, supportive services and community partnerships



CONTACT LINDA AT:
lwagner@swandvhl.org

Linda Warner

BACKGROUND:

Linda Warner completed her Master of Education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1994. In 1997, she began working in social services, spending nearly 20 years in community mental health. In 2017, Linda began work at SWAN where she has worked in legal advocacy, adult protective services, and as Executive Director since 2020. SWAN is based in Olney, IL but provides an array of services across 16 rural counties. With nine offices throughout their 7,000 square mile service region, SWAN has been providing invaluable services to its rural community for 44 years. SWAN's homeless shelter and domestic violence shelter are both located in Olney. At SWAN, we shelter, protect, advocate, and assist.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Rural homelessness and social services, domestic violence



CONTACT NICOLE AT:
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Nicole Wilson

BACKGROUND:

As Vice President of Community Investment, Heart of Illinois United Way, Nicole directs volunteer resource distribution and community impact activities across central Illinois. She manages grantmaking and programs including Supporting Student Success, the Home for All Continuum of Care and the 2-1-1 information and referral line.

PARTNER WITH ME ON:

Community partnerships, government relations, grants administration, program development, outcome measurement and volunteer recruitment

Letter from the Illinois Community Advisory Council on Homelessness

Dear Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness,

The Illinois Community Advisory Council on Homelessness (“Council”) respectfully submits these recommendations in fulfillment of the annual requirement for the Council to provide guidance to the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness (“Task Force”) as mandated by state law. These recommendations are made independently of the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH).

The Council is composed of advocates, leaders and people with lived experience who are champions of housing justice and bring decades of experience and expertise from across the state. Since our inception in early 2022 and following the [2023 recommendations](#) made to the Task Force, we have actively worked to strengthen our relationship with

the Task Force, advance the Action Plan that resulted from the Racial Equity Roundtable on Black Homelessness and the subsequent report, [Black Homelessness in Illinois: Structural Drivers of Inequality](#), and support the implementation of the Home Illinois FY23-24 Plan and the development of the FY25-26 plan.



LEFT Debbie Resnick (former Council member), Kathy Niedorowski (Senior Manager of Partnerships & Programs, CFETH), Emily Krisciunas (Council member, Executive Director of CFETH), **Sendy Soto** (Chief Homelessness Office, City of Chicago), Christine Haley (Chief Homelessness Officer, State of Illinois), Blair Harvey (Chief Program Officer, Michael Reese Health Trust) at the ribbon cutting for Lawson House in Chicago. **Sendy Soto** was announced as the city's first Chief Homelessness Officer at this press conference.

The progress on our 2023 recommendations is outlined herein. A few important highlights include:

- **Richard Rowe**, a former member of the Council and individual with lived experience was hired as one of four Senior Policy Advisors through OPEH. Richard is working with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to support those returning from incarceration.
- **Brenda O’Connell**, a former member of the Council, is now serving as the Senior Policy Advisor with the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IDHA).
- The Council actively participated in the **Home Illinois Summit** in June 2023 and June 2024. The 2024 Home Illinois Summit had a morning plenary session that served as a joint meeting of the Council and the Task Force. The session consisted of a panel conversation with Task Force and Council members, people with lived experience and other community members:
 - Director Terry Prince, IL Coalition Against Domestic Violence (*moderator*)
 - Stephanie Lee, Renaissance Social Services Inc.
 - Secretary Dulce Quintero, IL Department of Human Services (IDHS)
 - Richard Rowe, IL Department of Corrections (IDOC)
 - Beth Warner, Legal Aid Chicago
- Some members of the Council participated in the **One System Initiative**, an effort led by the State to align the homeless response system and the system built in response to New Arrivals into a comprehensive homeless response system. While this effort focused on Chicago, it provides the Council and the State with an opportunity to learn how to bridge systems across Continuums of Care (CoCs) and leverage resources to serve all those in need of services and support

As we continue to implement and embed our recommendations in the Home Illinois Plan, we are excited to deepen our collaboration with the Task Force and amplify our collective impact. Our work is rooted in the values of equity, the recognition of housing as a human right, and the inclusion of individuals with lived experience in decision-making. We believe data-driven approaches should guide policies and programs.

While we strongly oppose the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *City of Grants Pass v Johnson*,¹ which allows for jurisdictions to enforce anti-camping ordinances, we do agree with one point raised in the majority opinion: **“Homelessness is complex. Its causes are many. So may be the public policy responses required to address it.”** We share OPEH’s Chief of Homelessness, Christine Haley’s belief that the time to end homelessness is **right now**.

Ending homelessness and reaching functional zero is only possible through deep collaboration between government, advocates, individuals with lived experience, service providers, and community members. This collaboration must center those most impacted and harness the expertise of those with lived experience. We must confront the root causes of homelessness, particularly systemic racism, which has led to Black Illinois residents being **eight times more likely** to experience homelessness than their White counterparts—a disparity that is double the national rate.

Addressing systemic racism is challenging, but we are encouraged by the State’s commitment to equity through Racial Equity Roundtables, data-driven discussions, and actionable plans. These efforts foster genuine collaboration and solutions-driven strategies that target the most impacted.

The principle of “nothing about us without us” must be the foundation of every action and implementation plan. It is in this spirit of shared governance that we offer our recommendations.

For 2025, we focus on three key areas:



Strengthen relationships between Interagency Task Force and Community Advisory Council members to develop and inform intentional collaboration between State agencies to strategically address homelessness and the service support system



Increase interaction between people with lived experience of homelessness and the Interagency Task Force



Ensure timely and adequate resources to meet the growing demand for homeless services in Illinois

¹ *City of Grants Pass v Johnson* (US Supreme Court June 28, 2024). https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/23pdf/23-175_19m2.pdf

We appreciate the growing partnership with the Interagency Task Force and your dedication to preventing and ending homelessness in Illinois. We extend special thanks to Chief Haley for her steadfast leadership and partnership. Indeed, it is together that we can create a future where every resident has a safe and stable home.

In partnership,

Sherri Allen-Reeves

Executive Director, Phoenix Foundation, NFP

Tamela Milan-Alexander

*Community Engagement Director, EverThrive Illinois/
Representative of the Collaborative on Child Homelessness Illinois*

Otha Gaston

Chicago Lived Experience Commission

John Herring

Executive Director, Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living

Jennifer Hill

*Executive Director, Alliance to End Homelessness
in Suburban Cook County*

Eugene Humphrey

Executive Director, Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI)

Marlena Kalafut

*CDBG Program Manager, Economic and Community Development
Agency*

Niya Kelly

*Director of State Legislative Policy, Equity and Transformation,
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless*

Brandie Knazze

Commissioner, Chicago Department of Family and Support Services

Emily Krisciunas

*Executive Director, Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness
(CFTEH)*

Ron Lund

Community Services Director, Project NOW

Jose Muñoz

CEO, La Casa Norte

April Redzic

President & CEO, DuPagePads

Susan Reyna-Guerrero

Chief Executive Officer, Covenant House Illinois

Carolyn Ross

President and Chief Executive Officer, All Chicago

Linda Werner

Executive Director, Stopping Woman Abuse Now, Inc. (SWAN)

Nicole Wilson

*Vice President of Community Investment,
Heart of Illinois United Way*

Progress on 2023 Recommendations

2023 RECOMMENDATION

PROGRESS/STATUS UPDATE

Strengthen relationships between Interagency Task Force & Community Advisory Council members

Build in standing updates at Interagency Task Force and Council meetings about the current work of the other group and opportunities for engagement

- Updates on each respective group is provided at meetings
- *Opportunity:* build out a formal process to share information and collaborate outside of meeting agendas

Utilize Council member expertise for relevant Interagency TF meeting agenda items (i.e. youth, reentry, rural homelessness)

- OPEH is setting up workgroups (e.g. public benefits access, workforce of the homeless service sector, planning the 2025 Summit, and building public's understanding of systemic drivers of homelessness) where Task Force and Council members are invited to participate

Partner with the Council to host Interagency TF members and their senior staff at Council-member's organizations and other organizations to learn about their innovative work to solve homelessness

- The Task Force had a meeting at Matthew House, a homeless and supportive housing provider in the Chicago area
- Another IATF meeting was at the Springfield library, and it included a presentation from an outreach program based out of the library.

Hold a special session for Interagency Task Force, Council members, and OPEH staff to build community and celebrate progress at the 2024 Home Illinois Summit

- The 2024 Home Illinois Summit had a morning plenary session that served as a joint meeting of the Council and the Task Force. The session consisted of a panel conversation with Task Force and Council members, people with lived experience and other community members:
 - Director Terry Prince, IL Coalition Against Domestic Violence (moderator)
 - Stephanie Lee, Renaissance Social Services Inc.
 - Secretary Dulce Quintero, IL Department of Human Services (IDHS)
 - Richard Rowe, IL Department of Corrections (IDOC)
 - Beth Warner, Legal Aid Chicago

2023 RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS/STATUS UPDATE
<p>Collaborate with the Council to support State agency staff in deepening their understanding of the systemic causes of homelessness, the trauma of the experience and the intersection between homelessness and the work of the Interagency Task Force departments. This could look like collaborating on short written communications for State staff, training, or opportunities for field visits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY25, OPEH will convene a work group for State employee program staff to discuss innovative and promising practices, and to identify areas for interagency collaboration. This will be a group of programmatic leaders and staff who are closer to the agency's work across departments than the executive-level Task Force members. This will provide a good forum for identifying the needs of agency staff in this area and working to address them, leveraging the Council for support.
<p>Prioritize collaboration between the Council and the OPEH Fellows, four new senior level policy experts who will work within the IDOC, the IDHS, ILHS, and IHDA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fellows are funded through the Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness (CFTEH) (member of the Council) The fellows are actively engaged with the Council, including attending Council meetings, engaging Council members in projects like planning the 2025 Summit, incorporating Council recommendations around the Statewide Referral Network (SRN) into IHDA and IL Department of Human Services (IDHS) team member's activities
<p>Collaborate with the Council to improve SRN policies and processes, with a focus on the program's ability to house clients in a timely and person-centered manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IHDA Senior Policy Advisor (former Council member) and IDHS Assistant Director are actively working on SRN with other State staff and their work is being informed by the Council's 2023 recommendations

Increase interaction between people with lived experience of homelessness and the interagency task force

<p>Hold at least one yearly session dedicated to conversation between Task Force members and people with lived experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The joint committee meeting held during the 2024 Summit (see above) served this purpose
<p>Consult people with lived experience to advise and participate in the development of State homelessness-related policy and programmatic decisions. Budget to include compensating people with lived experience for consulting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHS and partners led by OPEH were awarded a Youth Homeless Systems Improvement (YHSI) grant from HUD which began October 2024. This grant will allow people with lived experiences to be compensated to advise the State in policymaking. This includes a Statewide Youth Advisory Committee and a youth internship program at IL Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) and OPEH. The Senior Policy Advisor hired for IDOC through OPEH brings lived experience to their senior role OPEH continues to support the work to recruit people with lived experience to the Council and the Youth Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee

2023 RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS/STATUS UPDATE
<p>Maintain and build on the support OPEH is providing, through its partnership with the Supportive Housing Partners Association (SHPA), to lived experience members of the Council, the Subcommittee on Youth Homelessness, and similar State-affiliated groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHPA remains the lead partner contracted by OPEH to act in this capacity and provides ongoing support and programming around leadership development for people with lived experience
<p>Explore weighing lived experience of homelessness or housing instability as a preference when hiring for State staff roles that provide services to or set policies related to people experiencing homelessness. Encourage the State's delegate agencies to do the same.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been no progress to date on this recommendation.

Work with OPEH to build on the strong foundation laid out in the Home Illinois FY23-24 Plan

<p>Incorporate recommendations from the Council & Racial Equity Roundtable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FY25-26 Home Illinois plan includes all of the commitments related to implementing the Action Plan which accompanied the Black Homelessness Report
<p>Continue to build on the use of local CoCs as partners in local policy and funding allocation decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Home Illinois Scattered Site Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Shelter Diversion programs have all been identified through CoCs • OPEH is working to make data and technical assistance available to CoCs through partnerships such as the IL Department of Public Health (IDPH) Homelessness Mortality and Morbidity report building on CoC-specific data, CoC's participating in the YHSI data-matching project, an FY24 ending veteran homelessness initiative, the Illinois Quality Data Collaborative, and 100 day challenges. • The IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has awarded grants to partnerships between CoCs and local workforce development entities. CoCs were required participants in this funding opportunity

2023 RECOMMENDATION	PROGRESS/STATUS UPDATE
<p>Elevate the lessons learned and the outcomes achieved through Home Illinois-connected pilot projects, including guaranteed income pilots, Flexible Housing Pool pilot populations, IL Department of Juvenile Justice housing assistance pilot for youth post-release, IDPH intensive ER case management pilots, and SNAP restaurant meals pilot program. Replicate successes across the state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Black Homelessness in Illinois report was socialized broadly through a press conference, community events presenting on the report, and webinars • Similar outreach and dissemination efforts were utilized for IDPH's Illinois Homelessness Mortality and Morbidity 2017-2022 report (released in July 2024), including presenting it at the Home Illinois Summit • Several of these research/pilot projects are ongoing and do not have data available yet, including the guaranteed income pilot.
<p>Include status updates on each of the State actions committed to in the Home Illinois FY23-24 Plan and explain barriers encountered, lessons learned, and next steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A status update on the Home Illinois FY23-24 plan will be published in October 2024.
<p>Include housing & shelter needs of asylum seekers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The One System Initiative (phase 1) concluded in September. The State and City received 14 recommendations from community partners, organization leaders, and people with lived experience • The new Home Illinois FY 25-26 plan will be out in October and will include data on housing and shelter needs of new arrivals

Recommendations to the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness from the Council

As established in Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2021-21 and codified into law in HB 2831, the Community Advisory Council on Homelessness is tasked with advising the Illinois Interagency Task Force on Homelessness on its mission to achieve "functional zero" homelessness in the State of Illinois. In pursuit of this goal, the Council will discuss and make recommendations on improving health and human services for those experiencing homelessness, strengthening housing stability, and unnecessary institutionalization.



ABOVE Council member Sherri Allen-Reeves, Executive Director of Phoenix Foundation, smiles at the 2024 HOME Illinois Summit.

For more information, see
<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=138563>

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Strengthen relationships between Interagency Task Force and Community Advisory Council members to develop and inform intentional collaboration between State agencies to strategically address homelessness and the service support system

Since spring 2022, we have been dedicated to collaborating with the State, community partners, and people with lived experience to strategically address homelessness. This requires confronting its root causes and dismantling systemic inequities across sectors—both public and private. Building on the progress of our first report, we aim to strengthen our collaboration and community engagement to ensure equitable implementation of the Home Illinois Plan. To achieve this, we recommend the following:

1. IDENTIFY & CONNECT

Strategically partner with the DCFS to identify families at risk of homelessness and to connect them into services to prevent homelessness

2. PARTNER

Partner with the Council, the Illinois Youth Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee and State agencies responsible for discharge planning from institutionalized systems (i.e. IDOC, Division of Mental Health, Department of Juvenile Justice) as well as from child welfare custody (eg. DCFS) to ensure individuals are not routinely discharged into homeless or shelter systems.

3. COUNT & SUPPORT

OPEH and other state agencies should work with the Council to develop a plan to accurately count and adequately support individuals and families who are doubled up and/or couch surfing, including allowing for State-funded programs (without use of Federal dollars) to serve this population.

SNAPSHOT

During the 2023 school year, there were over 46,300 students across Illinois (pre-kindergarten to seniors in high school) who were living unstably with family and friends.

CHICAGO: Chicago Public School (CPS) data shows that for the 2023–2024 school year, there were 26,800 students experiencing homelessness, 67% of whom lived doubled-up in the homes of others due to economic hardship.² Federal law recognizes that doubled-up students should be counted as experiencing homelessness, with rights protected under the federal McKinney-Vento Act and the Illinois Education for Homeless Students Act. To contrast that with the 2024 Point in Time count, which is a one-night snapshot based on the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) definition of literal homelessness, which informs Federal funding for services and resources for homeless response, there were just under 19,000 people counted as homeless. Of course, the doubled up population is not represented in this number and consequently cannot access HUD resources.

4. BUILD TOOLS & RESOURCES

Build out tools and resources to help communities address challenges related to zoning for affordable housing and shelters across the state (e.g. develop toolkits on zoning, legislative recommendations)

5. CREATE AWARENESS

Continue to work with the Task Force and OPEH to implement the Home Illinois Plan including creating awareness about the plan and what it seeks to accomplish

² Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, <https://chicagohomeless.org/learn/#homelessness>

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Increase interaction between people with lived experience of homelessness and the Interagency Task Force

The adage “nothing about us without us” is central to the Council’s work. We deeply value the expertise of our members with lived experience, whose input is essential to implementing the Home Illinois plan and advancing our collective success. As demonstrated at the 2024 Home Illinois Summit’s joint committee meeting, those who have experienced homelessness or housing instability offer critical insights into solutions needed to achieve functional zero. For this reason, we believe this focus must be elevated again in our 2024 recommendations.

While summits and roundtables are important, it is even more crucial to fully integrate people with lived experience into decision-making processes and leadership positions within both the public and private sectors. This means hiring, supporting and positioning them to influence policies, programs, and investments. Their perspectives undeniably help bridge the gap between theory and the real-world challenges individuals face when navigating these complex systems. To further strengthen this collaboration, we recommend the following:

1. CONSULT ON PLANS & STRATEGIES

Consult with the Council and people with lived experience in the development of communications plans and engagement strategies that are developed by the State in response to initiatives such as the Racial Equity Roundtable on Black Homelessness. This can be done by partnering with the Communications Campaign Work Group of the Council, for example.

2. IDENTIFY BARRIERS

State agencies should partner with the Council and people with lived experience to identify barriers to hiring and supporting people with lived experience. This should include specific roles related to addressing homelessness or housing instability as well as other roles within State government that may not be directly related to their lived experience. The State should work with the Council and people with lived experience to develop plans to address these barriers to hire and retain more people with lived experience within State government.



LEFT Jennifer Hill, Executive Director of Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County sits with Kathy Booton Wilson, Executive Director of Deborah’s Place, at the 2024 HOME Illinois Summit.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Ensure timely and adequate resources to meet the growing demand for homeless services in Illinois

The vision of the [Home Illinois Plan](#) clearly states:

“No resident in the State of Illinois lives on the street, in a shelter or in overcrowded housing. Illinoisians earn a living wage that allows them to afford housing in their community, without fear of eviction. When a housing crisis occurs, safety net supports allow quick resolution to stabilize housing.”

The Plan lays a clear roadmap for our collective work to end homelessness in Illinois. With camping bans increasing throughout Illinois (and the country) as a result of the US Supreme Court’s decision in [City of Grants Pass v. Johnson](#), inflation, the childcare crisis, the influx of new arrivals to the state, and the impending fiscal cliff due to pandemic recovery funds being spent, there is a critical need for continued funding to support those at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness and housing instability. In order to achieve success in carrying out the Plan’s goals, objectives, and strategies, the State must ensure that resources are disbursed at scale to meet the growing needs of the homeless population across the state.

In addition to sufficient resources needed to meet the complex needs of residents, resources must be disbursed swiftly so that community organizations and partners can meet the urgent needs of their clients. Bureaucratic rules, regulations, and duplicative processes hinder efforts to center the client’s needs immediately and the non-profit sector bears the administrative and financial burden as a result.

To achieve success in the future implementation of the Home Illinois Plan, we recommend the following:

1. ALIGN RESOURCES WITH PRIORITIES

State resources and funding opportunities, including one-time pandemic recovery dollars that are still in process of being disbursed, should align with priorities set out in the Home Illinois Plan and the Council’s Recommendation Report to the Interagency Task Force. Ensure the disbursement of these resources assists in meeting targets developed through the Stella M modeling carried out by HomeBase in partnership with OPEH (*as outlined in the [Home Illinois Plan](#) and in Table 1*)

TABLE 1: Units Needed by Population and Housing Type

	Emergency Shelter (ES)	Transitional Housing (TH)*	Rapid Rehousing (RRH)**	Permanent Supportive Housing and other Permanent Housing (PSH/OPH)	Total
Current Units	7,909	1,804	2,342	11,181	23,236
Units Needed	12,145	2,172	12,770	22,153	49,240
Additional Units Needed	4,236	368	10,428	10,972	26,004

* Total units combined all RRH together by an adjusted 12-month rate

** Dedicated Affordable Housing, Homeless prevention and other programs were not included in this analysis. Only ES, TH, RRH, PSH and OPH were included to match the data received through Stella P.

2. SUPPORT & ASSESS 211 COVERAGE

Support the statewide coverage of 211 in order to assess how 211 centers across Illinois are working with CoCs to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness and to determine ways in which 211 can serve as an access point for diversion and other homeless services

3. REDUCE THE BURDEN ON PROVIDERS

Collaborate with the Council to review grantee administrative, data collection, and reporting requirements and assess what efforts can be made to reduce the burden on providers and streamline data. For example, some State agencies require additional data reporting (e.g. Excel spreadsheets) with data that is already being collected via the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or InfoNet. This assessment should include the necessary staffing structure needed within State agencies for grants management

4. PARTNER ON RESOURCE DISBURSEMENT

When disbursing resources, State agencies should partner with CoCs to lead in how these resources are accessed and coordinated.

EXAMPLE

In response to the recent US Supreme Court decision in *City of Grants Pass v Johnson* which allows for the criminalization of people sleeping in public spaces, some jurisdictions have distributed targeted outreach dollars. However, some of these dollars have been given to law enforcement agencies instead of specialized homeless service providers who have dedicated outreach teams. We believe this lacks a trauma-informed and person-centered approach.

5. AFFIRM BUDGET REQUEST

The Council fully affirms the FY26 Budget request (See [Appendix B](#)) put forward by Housing Action Illinois and the Illinois Shelter Alliance that calls for \$100 million in new funding for HOME Illinois initiatives. Specifically, the budget requests calls for:

- \$40 million increase for the Emergency and Transitional Housing (ETH) Program.
- \$10 million to support Street Outreach for people experiencing homelessness.
- \$4 million in additional funding for the existing Shelter Diversion program.
- \$5 million budget increase for the Homelessness Prevention Program.
- \$11 million based on what is understood to be the minimum request from the Supportive Housing Providers Association at the time of submitting the request
- \$30 million for priorities determined by the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness after consultation with Continuum of Care leaders, advocates, funded service providers and others. Needs include more funding for existing HOME Illinois initiatives, such as Rapid Rehousing, Scattered Site Permanent Supportive Housing, as well as currently unmet needs, such as incentivizing local governments to allow shelters and organizational capacity building for funded providers.

Recommendations to the Interagency Task Force from the Public Benefits Work Group

As a direct result of the recommendations put forward by the Council in 2023, OPEH is in the process of standing up a public benefits access work group as a subcommittee of the Council. Given the intersection of public benefits access and economic security and the connection to homelessness, public benefits experts and advocates put forward the following recommendations as it relates to the three primary goals of the Council's recommendations outlined above.

Strengthen relationships between Interagency Task Force and Community Advisory Council members to develop and inform intentional collaboration between State agencies to strategically address homelessness and the service support system

→ IDHS should partner with the Council, people with lived experience, and the public benefits work group to ensure that IDHS is able to identify people who are homeless to

ensure they receive all of the federal SNAP dollars they are entitled to receive, and to avoid thousands of people losing SNAP once the ABAWDs waiver goes away

Increase interaction between people with lived experience of homelessness and the Interagency Task Force and Ensure the adequate and swift disbursement of resources at scale to meet the growing homeless population in Illinois

- Consider ways to partner with people with lived experience to build out capacity within homeless services to provide SOAR services and assist in public benefits applications and appeals
- Partner with the Council and the public benefits work group to develop a proposal to build capacity within current and future funding structures to support SOAR advocacy, services, and IDHS public benefits access for people experiencing homelessness

The [SOAR effort in Illinois](#) is based off of the national initiative to increase access to SSI/SSDI for eligible adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. The SOAR program trains caseworkers in a proactive approach to support the application process that engages the client and reduces the days to decision while increasing the approval rate.

- Typically, caseworkers are providing SOAR support on top of their other duties of supporting clients experiencing homelessness. When completing SOAR-assisted cases, caseworkers are expected to:
 - Serve as the Appointed Representative throughout the application process.
 - Collect all medical records for treatment received in previous years.
 - Waive any fees associated with serving as Appointed Representative or for assistance with the application process or collection of medical records.

- Write a comprehensive Medical Summary Report that highlights the applicant's functional impairment through the document of his or her personal, medical, and work history.
- Track applications and outcomes including approval/denials and time to decision from application submission to receipt of SSA's decision.

This can be extremely burdensome for an already overburdened and underpaid workforce. Service providers should have dedicated staff to support clients in accessing SOAR and other public benefits.

While specific members of the Public Benefits Access Work Group have not been decided, the scope of the work group membership includes:

State agencies:

- DHS Disability Determination Services
- Social Security Administration (SSA) Regional Office
- IDOC: Reentry Programs and Policy
- DHS Local office operations

Community Orgs:

- IL Justice Project
- Access Living
- Uptown People's Law Center
- Legal Aid Chicago*
- Legal Council for Health Justice*
- Supportive Housing Providers Association (SHPA)
- Loyola University Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy

* Provided specific input and expertise on the recommendations outlined above.

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF 2024 RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen relationships between Interagency Task Force and Community Advisory Council members to develop and inform intentional collaboration between State agencies to strategically address homelessness and the service support system

- Strategically partner with the IL Department of Children and Family Services to identify families at risk of homelessness and to connect them into services to prevent homelessness
- Partner with the Council, other community partners and State agencies responsible for discharge planning from institutionalized systems (i.e. IL Department of Corrections, Division of Mental Health) as well as from child welfare custody (eg. DCFS) to ensure individuals are not routinely discharged into homeless or shelter systems.
- OPEH and other state agencies should work with the Council to develop a plan to accurately count and adequately support individuals and families who are doubled up and/or couch surfing, including allowing for State-funded programs (without use of Federal dollars) to serve this population.
- Build out tools and resources to address challenges related to zoning for affordable housing and shelters across the state (e.g. develop toolkits on zoning, legislative recommendations)
- Continue to work with the Task Force and OPEH to implement the Home Illinois Plan including creating awareness about the plan and what it seeks to accomplish

PROPOSED BY THE PUBLIC BENEFITS ACCESS WORK GROUP

IDHS should partner with the Council, people with lived experience, and the public benefits work group to ensure that ILDHS is able to identify people who are homeless to ensure they receive all of the federal SNAP dollars they are entitled to receive, and to avoid thousands of people losing SNAP once the ABAWDs waiver goes away

Increase interaction between people with lived experience of homelessness and the Interagency Task Force

- Hold at least one yearly session dedicated to conversation between Interagency Task Force members and people with lived experience of homelessness.
- Consult with the Council and People with Lived Experience in the development of communications plans and engagement strategies that are developed in response to initiatives such as the Racial Equity Roundtable on Black Homelessness
- State agencies should partner with the Council and people with lived experience to identify barriers to hiring and supporting people with lived experience. This should include specific roles related to addressing homelessness or housing instability as well as other roles within State government that may not be directly related to their lived experience. The State should work with the Council and people with lived experience to develop plans to address these barriers to hire and retain more people with lived experience within State government.

PROPOSED BY THE PUBLIC BENEFITS ACCESS WORK GROUP

Consider ways to partner with people with lived experience to build out capacity within homeless services to provide SOAR services and assist in public benefits applications and appeals

Ensure timely and adequate resources to meet the growing demand for homeless services in Illinois

- State resources and funding opportunities, including one-time pandemic recovery dollars, should align with priorities set out in the Home Illinois Plan and the Council's Recommendation Report to the Interagency Task Force. Ensure the disbursement of these resources assist in meeting targets developed through the Stella M modeling carried out by HomeBase in partnership with OPEH (as outlined in the Home Illinois Plan)
- Support the statewide coverage of 211 in order to assess how 211 centers across Illinois are working with CoCs across the state to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness and to determine ways in which 211 can serve as an access point for diversion and other homeless services
- Collaborate with the Council to review grantee administrative, data collection, and reporting requirements and assess what efforts can be made to reduce the burden on providers and streamline data. This assessment should include the necessary staffing structure needed within State agencies for grants management
- When disbursing resources, State agencies should partner with CoCs to lead in how these resources are accessed and coordinated.
- The Council fully affirms the FY26 Budget request put forward by Housing Action Illinois and the Illinois Shelter Alliance that calls for \$100 million in new funding for HOME Illinois initiatives.

PROPOSED BY THE PUBLIC BENEFITS ACCESS WORK GROUP

Partner with the Council and the public benefits work group to develop a proposal to build capacity within current funding structures to support SOAR advocacy, services, and IDHS public benefits access for people experiencing homelessness

Appendix B

October 8, 2024

TO: Christine Haley and Colleen Mahoney, Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness

FROM: Bob Palmer and Foluke Akanni, Housing Action Illinois
Doug Kenshol, Illinois Shelter Alliance

SUBJECT: FY 26 Budget Request

We request that Governor Pritzker's FY26 budget proposal include a total of \$100 million in new funding for HOME Illinois initiatives to keep making progress reaching functional zero homelessness across the state, prioritizing a \$40 million increase for the Emergency and Transitional Housing (ETH) Program.

Both through the limited data we have available and what we know from Continuums of Care and others around the state, there has been a significant increase in unsheltered homelessness and demand for shelter due to a variety of factors.

Reflecting input from our advocacy partners and service providers, and based on feedback from people with lived experience gained over time, our FY26 budget priorities for HOME Illinois are as follow:

- \$40 million increase for the Emergency and Transitional Housing (ETH) Program.
- \$10 million to support Street Outreach for people experiencing homelessness.
- \$4 million in additional funding for the existing Shelter Diversion program.
- \$5 million budget increase for the Homelessness Prevention Program.
- \$11 million based on what we understand to be the minimum request from the Supportive Housing

Providers Association at the time of finalizing this memo. (Please confirm with SHPA what their final request is.)

- \$30 million for priorities determined by the Illinois Office to Prevent and End Homelessness after consultation with Continuum of Care leaders, advocates, funded service providers and others. Needs include more funding for existing HOME Illinois initiatives, such as Rapid Rehousing, Scattered Site Permanent Supportive Housing, as well as currently unmet needs, such as incentivizing local governments to allow shelters and organizational capacity building for funded providers.

We have greatly appreciated the new investments in the FY24 and FY25 state budget to support the HOME Illinois plan for our state. Just to focus on the funding that has impacted emergency shelter providers most directly, the increase funding for the ETH Program has made sure that people served with shelter capacity created during the COVID-19 pandemic could be maintained and additional capacity could be created to start reducing the the statewide shortage of 4,551 emergency shelter beds identified by your administration's Interagency Task Force on Homelessness.

However, to eliminate this emergency shelter bed deficit will require consistent, annual significant new state budget investments to support the ETH Program for next fiscal year and many years to come.

We have been surveying ETH-funded agencies and been able to get detailed written responses from about 30 of them. Some examples of what agencies told us about how they were able to expand capacity using FY24 funding:

- Increasing the number of individuals and families served by creating new shelter beds, transitional housing units and/or increasing the number of hotel vouchers available.
- Expanding staffing and services to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all year round.
- Improving the ability to pay more competitive wages.
- Increasing the number of case managers on staff.

Regarding their budget situation, one ETH Program let us know:

“Our annual Homeless Shelter (70 Bed) operating budget for FY25 is \$1.3M. This shelter provides both Emergency and Transitional services including cooked meals, transportation, case management and other related support. Our average length of stay is 60-70 days. We served over 200 clients last year, a 20% increase over previous year. The average cost per client is around \$6,000 for the 60-70 days of shelter, housing and services....We are projecting a \$200-300K loss for FY25 which we hope to cover through private donations and fundraising. Overall, only 50% of our budget is funded by Federal, State, County and Local Government.”

In terms of the overall impact of the ETH Program, one shelter provider let us know:

“This is literally saving lives, from the family that came in this week to us from sleeping in a car during a storm, to the mom and kids who came in the week before fleeing domestic violence, to the senior we have staying with us who lost her apartment when dementia affected her ability to function on her own and we’re now working to connect with appropriate medical care. Each bed represents a person who is not in an emergency room or morgue. They are alive and well because they have shelter.”

From our survey, we have more examples of successes and ongoing challenges faced by ETH-funded agencies that we are happy to share with you.

At this particular point in time, increased funding for the ETH Program is necessary for several factors that we know you are very well aware of:

- Shelters continue to be at capacity in many parts of the state, resulting in people being denied shelter and the implementation of waiting lists for a basic human need. Local governments and law enforcement agencies struggling to find shelter for people living in encampments are particularly visible examples, but turnways primarily happen with a single person or household, often with young children approaching a shelter alone. For example, one shelter provider recently told us:

“In Rock Island County, there are only 65 emergency shelter beds and the waiting list is literally 4 weeks.”

- Increased criminalization of homelessness, as reflected in US Supreme Court Grants Pass decision and response by many local governments. Several Illinois municipalities passed camping bans prior to the decision and many more have since, with an unknown number more to come.
- Ongoing increased workforce and program delivery costs being experienced by emergency shelter providers. For example, one shelter provider told us:

“We do not own any of our shelters or offices—we rent them. We recently received notice from our landlord of an increase in rent of \$1064 per month that equates to \$12,768 annually that we did not budget for in FY25. Fortunately, we were able to negotiate a lower increase for this fiscal year -- but must be ready for the full increase in FY26.”

- Increased operating fund needs for agencies working to develop new or improved non-congregate and congregate shelters using resources from IHDA, DCEO and elsewhere. Lack of operating funds for these facilities is an extremely common obstacle to completing planned projects and developing new projects.
- Need to respond to violence against people experiencing homelessness, which is a regular, well-documented occurrence. For example, the recent IOPEH morality report documented that there were almost three times

the proportion of people experiencing homelessness murdered compared to the general population (2.9% vs 1.0%). The recent mass murder of four people who were reported to have been experiencing homelessness on a CTA train at the Forest Park Blue Line station is a particularly high profile and senseless example.

As you know, the ETH program provides not just shelter. Every funded agency provides case management and supportive services. Other uses of funds include meals, street/public transit outreach. Agencies funded, including those funded with ETH funds that are passed through the City of Chicago, include domestic violence shelters, reentry housing programs, homeless youth programs, family shelters and single adult shelters.

Regarding our budget request, there are three requests requiring further discussion

1. Eliminate the 25% programmatic match requirement for the ETH Program in the Administrative Code. The match has been required since 1991, when ETH had a different name. At present it has not been communicated to us what compelling need it fulfills at a time when the HOME Illinois plan has identified creating additional shelter beds as a high priority.

When ETH funding was very low overall, the match was less of a challenge. Now with the higher level of funding, many agencies report to us that it's difficult to meet the match and/or a needless administrative burden to calculate in-kind contribution. One provider let us know:

"The majority of our other grants are for housing, not shelter or diversion. So while an increase in ETH funding would be very welcome, it would also make it more difficult to find the 25% match and put pressure on efforts to increase unrestricted income."

Another provider told us this about the match requirement:

"We may have to scale down the services rather than continue to expand."

2. ETH-funded agencies, as well as other agencies funded to work on HOME Illinois initiatives, need appropriate physical and administrative infrastructure to be able to successfully serve people in need, e.g., actual shelter beds in congregate and non-congregate settings, case management offices, spaces to serve meals, funding

to cover utilities and much more. ETH Program funds should be able to be spent on these costs and/or the IDHS should provide a dedicated funding source that can be used for this purpose. This would help address a factor that contributed to challenges ramping up spending after significant funding increases in HOME Illinois funding.

One provider told us:

"For example, ETH, HP, and Supportive Housing do not allow for office space rent and utilities but yet, we need a place to be able to meet with those needing services and participants need to know where to go to access services."

3. Rather than creating a new street outreach program, these services should be integrated as an allowable use of funds into the existing ETH Program to fund current ETH agencies already doing street outreach work. Of course, funding could also be committed to new agencies, including agencies only funded to do street outreach that are partnering with the local shelters and Continuum of Care. Expanding the eligible uses of ETH funds could make sense for other HOME Illinois plan initiatives. Overall, we greatly appreciate all the new programs created under HOME Illinois, but it also creates significant administrative burdens with more contracts to manage, more reports to complete, etc. With appropriate oversight from IDHS, moving towards a smaller number of programs with more eligible uses will work better for both providers and the people they serve.
4. For certain IDHS HOME Illinois programs and other programs now within the new Office of Housing Stability, Continuums of Care have input into recommending what specific agencies get funded. This is not the case for other programs, including ETH. We ask that IDHS move towards getting recommendations from Continuums of Care for ETH and other programs to ensure that all funded agencies are coordinating their services with the local service provider network. This is the case with most agencies, but there are some funded agencies where this is not the case.
5. We very much appreciate the creation of the Office of Housing Stability at IDHS to improve the administration of contracts and other administrative functions. We ask that IOPEH and the Office of Housing Stability get

feedback from CoC leads and funded agencies before implementing major reforms to ensure that the reforms actually solve the longstanding problems without creating new ones.

6. We would like to work with IOPEH to develop a capital budget strategy to increase the supply of permanent supportive housing and emergency shelters in Illinois through rehabilitation and new construction projects.
7. We would like to work with IOPEH to work on a strategy to address zoning roadblocks, municipal opposition and other factors that make it a challenge to secure sites for operating shelters, permanent supportive housing and other properties that support the HOME Illinois plan. One idea raised to us was piloting an incentive program to reward municipalities that approve new shelter facilities.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our budget request.