

Housing Action Illinois Advocacy Update November 28, 2011

Survey Shows Funds for Homelessness Prevention Not Available This Winter in Half of Illinois Communities

Agencies that administer homeless prevention grants across Illinois report that 55% of them will run out of funds by Dec. 31, leaving no help for families facing homelessness, according to a statewide survey released Monday.

In 11 years, the state's homeless prevention grant program has helped 96,231 Illinois households avoid homelessness. The average grant in FY 2010 was \$916, and 88% report they remained housed four months after getting the one-time grant.

But state budget cutbacks have decimated the program, leaving just \$1.5 million available this year—\$9.5 million (87%) less than was funded in FY 2008.

Meanwhile, federal stimulus funds that have offset state funding cutbacks are also running out, with 56% of agencies saying those federal funds are depleted.

“We need to restore the cuts to homelessness prevention funding at the state level,” said Maura McCauley, Senior Director for Housing at Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights. “Heartland served nearly 1,000 Chicago households in 18 months with federal prevention funds and this year with only the reduced state funds, we project serving 120.”

The rationale behind homelessness prevention assistance is that it's more cost effective and less disruptive for families and individuals.

"Helping Hands of Springfield operates a homeless shelter and has assisted people with prevention funding. Families we can assist with prevention funding won't have to seek shelter and experience all the destabilizing effects and emotional trauma that go along losing your home," said Brenda Johnson, Executive Director of Helping Hands of Springfield. "In the end, prevention also costs the public less than providing shelter."

We are advocating for the State of Illinois to restore homelessness prevention funding to \$5 million in next year's budget. They are also asking that a 52% budget cut to overnight shelters and transitional housing programs be restored.

Last year, the shelter program served 40,542 people, one-third of them below the age of 18. However, people were turned away 45,673 times due to insufficient resources. The 52% cuts cut to the Emergency and Transitional Housing Program could force an additional 6,746 people on to the streets.

“We acknowledge the ongoing budget problems at the state and federal level, but there seems no more basic role of government than to ensure that everyone has the

resources to keep a roof over their head, especially as we head into winter” said Bob Palmer, Policy Director for Housing Action Illinois.

Groups in the coalition asking for restoration of the state budget cuts include the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Housing Action Illinois and the Supportive Housing Providers Association.

[The report is available by clicking here.](#)

Housing Action Illinois Annual Conference a Big Success

Our Housing Matters! conference was a huge success! Policy advocates, housing counselors, housing developers and many others with a desire to promote and expand affordable housing gathered together in Chicago on November 10-11, 2011, to learn up-to-date information and methods to better help all people in Illinois have access to decent, affordable housing.

We held sixteen workshops and two plenary sessions to help attendees be better prepared to work during these difficult times. In addition, Mary Kenney, Executive Director at IHDA, gave an inspiring keynote address and Senator Dick Durbin spoke of the harsh realities facing us a federal level, and told us what we could do about them.

Finally, we celebrated Housing Action Illinois’ 25th Anniversary at a reception Thursday evening where we were able to see old friends and celebrate the accomplishments made in the last 25 years.

Thank you to all those who attended and made this conference such a success! We look forward to continuing our work with you to make affordable housing a reality in Illinois!

We also want to thank our sponsors: Chase, BMO Harris Bank, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago and State Farm Insurance Bank.

Corporation for Supportive Housing 20th Anniversary Event

The Corporation for Supportive Housing is celebrating its 20 year anniversary. On Tuesday, December 6, please join CSH in Chicago for a Supportive Housing Luncheon and day of free trainings. The deadline to RSVP has been extended to noon on Wednesday, November 30. [Click here for more information.](#)

For more information contact Bob Palmer, Housing Action Illinois, 312-939-6074 x. 206 or bob@housingactionil.org.

Housing Action Illinois Advocacy Update November 30, 2011

Funding for Emergency and Transitional Housing Restored by Illinois General Assembly
Last night, the Illinois General Assembly approved a supplemental appropriations bill that restores cuts to several human service programs, including the \$4.7 million cut to more than 100 nonprofit organizations in all parts of the state funded by the Emergency

and Transitional Housing Program. Larger budget cuts restored include funding for mental health and substance abuse programs.

Most of the money in the \$270 million bill will be used to fund the operation of seven state facilities for people with mental illness and developmental disabilities that had been slated for closure. (Hopefully, in the next year efforts to close these facilities and help people move into community-based housing will come to fruition.)

The bill was passed with bipartisan support and we expect Governor Quinn to sign the bill into law as soon as he receives it. Revenue to pay for the bill comes from reallocating existing resources.

For this victory, we especially want to thank all the nonprofit organizations funded by the Emergency and Transitional Housing Program that reached out to their legislators and the media during the last six months to communicate the impact of the cut on your ability to provide housing and services to people experiencing homelessness.

Thanks also to the more than 370 people contact their legislators through our action alert on HousingMatters.net. We also greatly appreciate all the advocacy organizations that also worked on restoring the cut, including the Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and the Supportive Housing Providers Association.

Please thank you legislators who voted favor of the bill, Senate Bill 2412 (House Amendment #2. You can see the House and Senate votes at the following links:
http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/votehistory/97/house/09700SB2412_11292011_013000T.pdf
http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/votehistory/97/senate/09700SB2412_11292011_033001C.pdf

For more information contact Bob Palmer, Housing Action Illinois, 312-939-6074 x. 206 or bob@housingactionil.org.