



NATIONAL SURVEY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

ILLINOIS
Winter 2010

www.icprwb.org

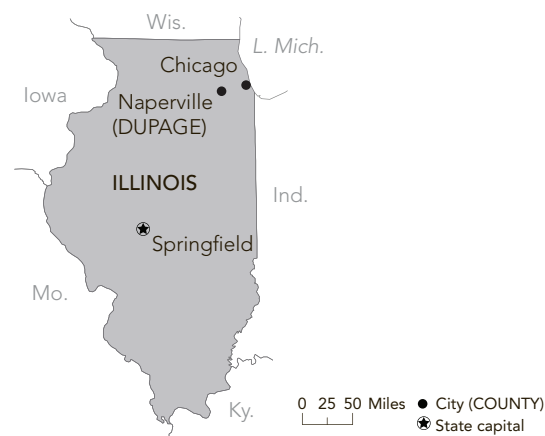
from the INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN AND POVERTY

Illinois had an estimated 2,074 homeless families on a single night in 2008, with providers serving more than twice their bed capacity over the course of the year.¹ This brief summarizes the state's public and private initiatives to assist these families.

State Taskforce on Homelessness

Taskforce: There is no task force on homelessness in Illinois. The Illinois Affordable Housing Task Force (established by executive order in September 2003) coordinates housing resources to prioritize affordable housing development for low-income households, including those who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

Governor's Appointee: There is no governor's appointee.



Demographic Summary and Overview of Regional Organization

	Illinois	Chicago	DuPage County
Persons in homeless families ²	6,368	2,052	386
Number of family shelter beds ³	7,649	3,270	509
Persons in homeless families (per 10,000 population in families) ⁴	13	21	10
Percent of families in poverty ⁵	13.75%	24.42%	5.16%
10-Year plan date approved or implemented	No plan	2003	2004
10-Year plan target population	No plan	All	All
Point-in-time count frequency	N/A	Biennially	Biennially
Point-in-time count managing agency	Locally managed	Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	DuPage County Homeless Continuum of Care
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) managing agency	Locally managed	Chicago Department of Family and Support Services	DuPage County Department of Community Services
Continuum of Care (CoC) lead applicant or main organizing agency	Illinois Department of Human Services	Chicago Alliance to End Homelessness	DuPage County Department of Community Services

Chicago's Efforts to End Homelessness

In 2003, Chicago was one of the first major metropolitan areas to develop a ten-year plan to end homelessness. *Getting Housed, Staying Housed* outlines strategies to transform Chicago's homeless service delivery system from an emergency and transitional shelter-based continuum of care to a "housing first" model focused on homeless prevention and permanent supportive housing.⁶ As part of this plan, the city has converted emergency and transitional shelter beds to "interim housing" units. Interim housing is temporary shelter with supportive services that focuses on quickly moving families into permanent housing. While clients could previously live in second-stage housing with supportive services for up to two years, now families can stay in interim housing for no longer than 120 days, unless they are granted an extension.⁷ In addition to transforming the city's shelter system, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services has instituted programs aimed at rapidly re-housing homeless families. These programs include Families First, a housing first initiative that moves sheltered

The *National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families* is an online resource for service providers, advocates, researchers, and public policy makers working in the field of family homelessness. The Web site provides a state-by-state snapshot of the interconnections between governmental and nonprofit work to end family homelessness. For additional information on Illinois and other states, visit www.icprwb.org

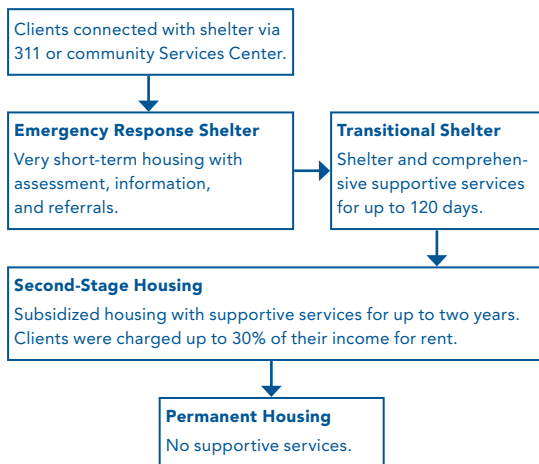


families with high potential for self-sufficiency into permanent housing with supportive services.

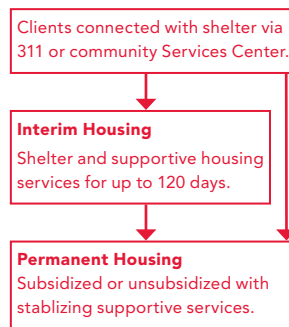
After the plan's implementation, however, some local service providers have criticized Chicago's strategy to end homelessness. In 2006, these organizations formed Concerned Providers, a consortium under the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Concerned Providers argues that while *Getting Housed, Staying Housed* did help develop additional units of permanent housing and expand homeless prevention efforts, the increase in permanent housing was offset by a 39% decrease in emergency and transitional shelter beds from 2002 to 2007.⁸ This reduction in the number of shelter beds has resulted in many facilities operating at capacity and turning away families. The Department of Family and Support Services is currently working on an evaluation of the plan's progress since 2007.

Changes in Chicago's Public Service Delivery System

Old Model



New Model



Stable Families Initiative

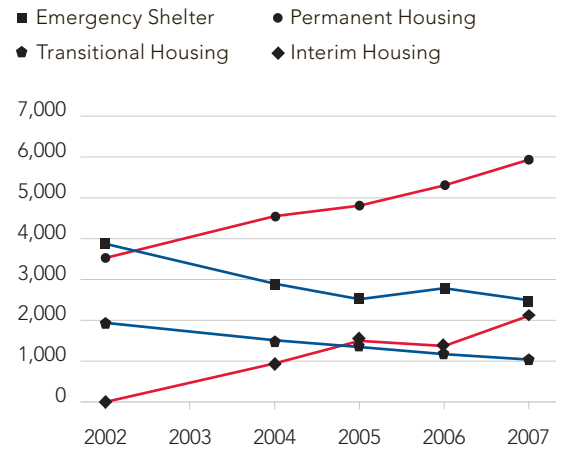
The Stable Families Initiative is a one-year pilot project administered by the Chicago Department of Community Development. Stable Families provides rent and utility assistance to facilitate the transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency and decrease the duration of homelessness. The program targets families that have a history of homelessness and/or have been residing in shelter for 45 days. Participating families must be able to pay 30% of their income towards program costs. In addition to financial assistance, each family receives supportive services, including employment assistance, case management, housing retention, and family preservation assistance. The pilot ended in November 2009, and as of January 2010, no outcome data is available.⁹

Empowering Homeless Women

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless created the Women's Empowerment Project (WEP) in 1992 to address the complex needs of homeless single women and children and improve their self-esteem. WEP organizers meet with over 100 homeless women each month in Chicago family shelters.¹⁰ The project offers life skills workshops to meet families' needs, refers families to low-income permanent housing, and trains the women as community leaders to educate and advocate about homelessness. Women engage in policy initiatives to increase affordable housing, improve access to childcare services, and expand homelessness prevention. Due to its success, WEP has inspired similar projects in four other states.¹¹

Number of Beds in Chicago

(by shelter type and year)



Source: City of Chicago, *There's No Place Like Home: State of the Plan*, December 2007. Data for 2003 is not available.

Endnotes

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *HUD's 2008 CoC Homeless Assistance Programs—Homeless Populations and Subpopulations*; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *AHAR Exchange Public Reports: 2008 Comprehensive Report of Sheltered Homeless Persons*.
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- Chicago Continuum of Care, *Getting Housed, Staying Housed*, August 2003.
- Marian Wang, "120 Days," *Chicago Reporter*, July–August 2009.
- City of Chicago, *There's No Place Like Home: State of the Plan*, December 2007.
- Chicago Department of Housing, *Rapid Re-Housing: Stable Families Initiative*, August 2008.
- Dollie Brewer (Senior Organizer, Women's Empowerment Project, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless), phone interview with author, January 25, 2010.
- Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, *Women's Empowerment Project*, <http://www.chicagohomeless.org/what/outreach/wep>