Inside Headlines

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A publication of the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies, 3435 Liberty Drive, Springfield, Illinois 62704 - (217) 789-0125

HOPE of East Central Illinois

HOPE of East Central Illinois is a non-profit agency providing services to victims of domestic violence and to women and children experiencing homelessness. Located in Charleston, Illinois, HOPE offers a wide range of services including an Emergency Domestic Violence Shelter, 24 hour Crisis Line, Children’s Program, Advocacy, Homeless Prevention, Referrals and Transitional Housing. The mission of HOPE is to “Empower persons to live independent, non-violent lives through the provision of Housing, Outreach, Prevention and Education.”

Homeless women with children frequently face a wide range of barriers in becoming self-sufficient. Lack of affordable housing, child care, transportation, education, job skills and other essential life skills can often create obstacles difficult to overcome.

In response to this issue, HOPE applied for and received HUD funding to begin a Transitional Housing Program. This 5 unit scattered-site program has been able to assist 18 families since it’s inception in 2003.

Admission to this program begins with a lengthy, in-depth assessment process. Clients stay in shelter during this 3-6 week assessment, enabling Transitional Housing staff to gain a comprehensive picture of the client history, possible goals, and to develop a solid rapport.

National Housing Trust Fund Out of House Committee

On July 31, the House Committee on Financial Services approved the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act, H. R. 2895. The final committee vote, 45-23, showed bipartisan support with all Democrats and eight Republican members supporting the bill. The Republicans were: Representatives Mike Castle (DE), Peter King (NY), Walter Jones, (NC) Chris Shays (CT), Gary Miller (CA), Jim Gerlach (PA), Steve LaTourette (OH) and Shelley Moore Capito (WV).

This is the first time in the history of the National Housing Trust Fund campaign that a trust fund bill has been approved by a committee and reported to the House for action. H. R. 2895 was introduced by Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank (D-MA) on June 28 with 16 bipartisan original co-sponsors.

Several amendments were adopted during the committee’s consideration. The manager’s amendment and one (Continued on page 4)

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Homeless Headlines

The Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies has published the monthly Homeless Headlines and the Homeless Hotline since 1991 under contract with the Illinois Department of Human Services.

For a free subscription, contact:
Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies
3435 Liberty Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62704
Telephone: (217) 789-0125
Fax: (217) 789-0139
www.icaanet.org

Chairperson, Dwight Lucas
President & CEO,
Dalitso Sulamoyo
Editor, Allan Timke
atimke@icaanet.org

The Annie E. Casey Foundation released its 2007 Kids Count Data Book this week, an annually published collection of measures on child well-being. The report uses 10 indicators, including the percent of children in families near poverty with unaffordable housing, to do state-by-state comparisons. The report noted a mixture of progress and setbacks for children and teens over the last year. While the child death rate, teen birth rate, high school dropout rate and the proportion of teens not in school or working improved over the last year, the incidence of low birth weight babies and children living in families in which no parent has full-time, year-round employment as well as the child poverty rate and the number of children in single-parent families all worsened. The last two measures, the infant and teen death rates, improved slightly. For those measures that showed progress, the rate of improvement was slower than those seen in the late 1990s.

The report also notes that disparities between racial groups across various measures of child well-being are large, though the size of the gap varied by indicator. In general, the study indicates that African American children are the most vulnerable. While 15% of all children in the U. S. are African American, they compose 32% of the population in foster care. African American children also spend, on average, more time in the foster care system, with 23% staying for three years or more, compared to 13% of white children.

To address the needs highlighted by its data analysis, the Annie E. Casey Foundation advises intensifying efforts to prevent out-of-home placements for children, encouraging kinship care and focusing on permanent placement. It also emphasizes that other critical needs, such as affordable housing, are important for families on the path to long-term stability.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation offers an online suite of materials, including the raw data used in the analysis and a database that allows users to generate customized, state-by-state lists, graphs and maps. These resources, along with the full 2007 Kids Count Data Book, can be found here: www.kidscount.org/sld/databook.jsp. The Illinois data is at http://www.kidscount.org/sld/profile_results.jsp?r=15&d=1.

How states are responding to parents with significant barriers to employment in TANF programs is the focus of “TANF Policies for the Hard to Employ: Understanding State Approaches and Future Directions,” a new paper by the Urban Institute. The authors found that states and localities recognize that many parents who have challenges such as a mental health or substance abuse disability will require additional services or supports to access and sustain employment. A wide variety of strategies that states have adopted to improve employment outcomes are provided. The paper includes an overview of state policymakers’ concerns about how changes to the TANF program under the Deficit Reduction Act will impact their ability to serve families and administer the program.

For the full report, go to www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411501_hard_to_employ.pdf.
Downstate Illinois Nonprofit Conference
September 19, 2007 Springfield, IL

The Downstate Illinois Nonprofit Conference is a unique opportunity for downstate nonprofits to hear national and regional thought leaders speak about the challenge of leadership as well as connect with their peers. Offered on a biannual basis, this is the only conference structured to meet the needs of nonprofits south of I-80.

Making the Connection
IDHS Verifications
Contributor: DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform

Keynote speakers at the 2007 conference will be Marty Evans, former President and CEO of American Red Cross and a native of Springfield, and Ruth McCambridge, Editor in Chief of The Nonprofit Quarterly, a national publication on nonprofit management. The conference also includes 18 breakout sessions on leadership, management, and fundraising, as well as ample time for networking with colleagues.

Wednesday, September 19, 2007
7:30 - 8:30 a.m. Registration / Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 a.m. Opening Plenary
9:30 - 9:45 a.m. Networking Break / Visit Exhibitors / Curbside Consulting
9:45 - 11:00 a.m. Six Concurrent Sessions and Curbside Consulting
11:00 - 11:15 a.m. Networking Break / Visit Exhibitors / Curbside Consulting
11:15 - 12:30 p.m. Six Concurrent Sessions and Curbside Consulting
12:30 - 2:30 p.m. Lunch / Lunchtime Plenary
2:30 - 3:45 p.m. Six Concurrent Sessions and Curbside Consulting

Registration costs are as follows:
Registration (through Sept 18): $100 On-Site: $125 Students with ID: $45

The Crowne Plaza Hotel is this year's conference location. The adjacent Holiday Inn Express is also available for hotel accommodations. See http://www.lumpkinfoundation.org/conference/hotelinfo.php

During the past few months we have looked at how to apply for IDHS benefits, what application should be used and the interview process. In this column we will discuss the verifications that are needed. In order to approve (or disapprove) the application the caseworker will need to gather documents to support the decision. If the worker needs further information which is not available during the interview, the worker will provide a written request listing the items needed as well as provide a due date for return which is usually 10 calendar days after the interview.

In order to help prepare your clients for the interview, it is helpful to begin the process to gather the verification needed so it is available during the interview (saving time on having to provide it later and thus delaying the decision on the application). I want to take a look at the common types of verification needed for each program, and what types of documents may be able to be used by IDHS.

The verification process is discussed extensively in the IDHS Policy Manual (Chapter 02-07-00). Since the IDHS caseworker needs to assess eligibility for each program separately, and there are varying verification requirements for each program, it is important to first know what type of verification will be asked for:

If your clients have problems obtaining documents that are not in their possession (this is called third party verification), they can request more time or even ask for the IDHS caseworker to help obtain the needed verification. Make sure s/he contacts the IDHS caseworker before the due date to request an extension or to request the help. Help that IDHS provides can include such things as the worker sending a written request to the third party, attempting telephone contact with the third party, and giving the applicant a letter to show to the third party that says why the applicant needs the information. If your client is going to contact the third party for the needed information make sure it is done in writing with a copy of the written request provided to IDHS by the deadline date.

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The Overlooked Diagnosis

Personality disorders are chronic psychiatric conditions often associated with substance abuse and depression. Prior research has focused almost exclusively on antisocial personality disorder in homeless persons and ignored the other nine Axis II disorders listed in DSM-IV. Since 2000, the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter has been evaluating the occurrence of these disorders in five drop in centers in New York City and New Haven, CT with structured diagnostic interviews. To date, results indicate extremely high rates of Cluster A personality disorders (paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal) which are not simply the results of substance abuse, schizophrenia, or homelessness.

HOPE
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Obtaining full-time employment, full-time enrollment in school with some type of income, or a combination of the two is a client responsibility for assessment. In addition to working daily with shelter staff, a Transitional Housing Case Manager meets with the client 1-2 times per week to discuss future goals, past issues, and Transitional Housing Guidelines. While the case manager is assessing client needs the client is given extensive information regarding the program so that they may decide if it is the right fit for them.

Women who participate in the Transitional Program are continually moving toward self-sufficiency and empowerment. One large component of Transitional Housing is goal planning. Long-term goals are set upon entry into the program. Clients generally have several long-term goals that will lead to a self-sufficient future.

These goals vary greatly from client to client; for most, however, education or job skills are of great importance. For others paying off debt, purchasing a vehicle, or taking care of legal issues are key. Any goal that will contribute to a family’s journey toward empowerment is considered valid. Because the clients are setting their own goals, they become immediately invested in that future upon entry.

To facilitate long-term financial health clients also contribute 30% of their monthly income towards a savings account. Upon their departure the funds in the account are returned to the client. This ensures the opportunity to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

In addition to long-term goals clients meet weekly with their case manager to explore short-term goals. These goals generally contribute to the long-term plan; it’s often more productive and less overwhelming to break tasks down into steps that are easily identified.

As Transitional Housing staff provide transportation for residents in need these goals are often much easier to meet.

Not all goals are geared toward economic recovery. Staff often stress care of the self for clients. A large number of our residents have been unable to adequately devote the time or energy for such pursuits. When life becomes a daily struggle finding time for self-care takes a back seat. As many of our clients have issues involving childhood abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, substance abuse, etc., meeting with a counselor is a weekly requirement.

HOPE also offers a weekly two-hour support group for Transitional Housing clients. This group gives clients a time to give and receive support from women in similar situations as well as having some much needed time away from the everyday pressures of life.

Our 24-hour Crisis Line ensures that Transitional Housing residents have access to staff members for support at any given time. Clients are also frequently referred to other programs that may be of benefit, such as substance abuse or mental health centers.

HOPE staff frequently schedule and accompany clients with “mom’s time” events that have included yard-sales, board game/food night, movies, bowling, etc. In time, the women in our program learn that self-care is not only possible but essential to a healthy, full life.

Beyond goal planning and emotional health components HOPE clients also attend regularly scheduled life-skills and educational classes. Clients benefit from topics such as budgeting, parenting, resume-building, nutrition and organization. Such skill-building resources will assist clients in meeting the challenges of independent living upon their departure from the program.

Women who complete the Transitional Housing program find themselves in a far better situation than when they enter. Our agency has seen many women become successfully self-sufficient with the combined impact of the program and their own hard work; many have obtained a GED or Educational Certificate some are near completion of four-year degrees. Nearly all have ensured that their future will be a much brighter one.

HOPE of East Central Illinois is a United Way Agency and a member of the South Central Illinois Continuum of Care. For information about services please call (217)348-8815 or visit our website at www.hopeeci.org.

Homeless Headlines

The hidden impairment of these individuals has important implications for staff education and service planning.

For further information, go to www.ncsinc.org/what-we-do.shtml#research or contact the National Alliance to End Homelessness at the address in Headlines Directory.
Verifications

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If the client provides a copy of the written request for third party verification by the due date, or the local office has requested information from the third party, IDHS staff is instructed to take the following action:

☯ TANF: If the client meets the financial factors of eligibility, and a written request for third party verification is documented, IDHS can approve the case as presumptively eligible (which provides the person with a TANF check for 3 months while waiting for the third party non-financial verification to be received) (see PM 07-01-00 and PM 08-01-00).

☯ Missing Financial Factors (TANF) or Missing Financial or Non-financial Factors (Parent Assist, All Kids Assist, All Kids Moms and Babies, AABD): IDHS can grant an extension of

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Trust Fund

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from Representative Nydia Velasquez (D-NY), reported on last week (see Memo, 7-27), passed by voice votes.

Mr. Castle offered an amendment to raise the income targeting before the fund reaches $2 billion. The bill as introduced would reserve all funds for extremely low income households until the $2 billion annual threshold is reached. Once the threshold was passed, up to 25 percent of the funds can go to households with incomes up to 80 percent of the area median. Homeownership advocates sought to have the threshold dropped (see Memo, 7/27). Mr. Castle’s amendment preserves the $2 billion threshold, but allows up to 25 percent of the funds to go to households up to 60 percent area median income (AMI) before the threshold is met. After the threshold is met, up to 25 percent of the fund’s resources can serve families with incomes up to 80 percent of AMI. Ranking Member Spencer Bachus (R-AL) cautioned that the committee not lose focus on the extremely low income families who need help the most. The amendment was adopted on a voice vote.

An amendment offered by Mr. Miller was included in an “en bloc” amendment supported by Mr. Frank. An “en bloc” amendment packages several amendments together. Mr. Miller’s amendment would require “not less that 10 percent of the funds for the benefit only of families whose incomes exceed 50 percent of the median family income for the area.” Mr. Miller argued that this targeting provision is needed to develop qualified mixed income housing under the legislation and to increase workforce housing.

Several other amendments were included in the “en bloc” package. One offered by Representative Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) would establish an additional criterion for determining the funding formula by crediting communities for expanding their supply of affordable rental housing. Another offered by Representative Michael Capuano (D-MA) calls for a Congressional review of the funding formula and limits services provided to residents to a 33 percent match. The “en bloc” amendment was agreed to by a voice vote.

The committee accepted several other policy changes to H. R. 2895. Mr. Capuano offered a successful amendment to strike the small state minimum amount provided for under the formula. Representative Jeb Hensarling (R-TX) offered an amendment to give priority under the trust fund to families on the Section 8 and public housing waiting lists. The amendment passed.

Mr. Frank hopes to bring H. R. 2895 to the floor of the House sometime in September after Congress returns from the August recess.

For further information, contact the National Low Income Housing coalition at the address in Headlines Directory.
Verifications

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time to get the missing verification. If the office has a copy of the written request sent to the third party, the extension can be given even if the applicant did not ask for one. The extension may be for up to 90 calendar days from the application date.

If the missing verification is received by the end of the 90th day, IDHS is to determine eligibility for benefits and if eligible will approve the application as if the verification was received by the 30th day following application. If the applicant contacts the local office by the 90th day to say that the verification is not obtainable and the local office has been unable to get the information, IDHS is to contact the Bureau of Financial Support Policy to find out what action is to be taken.

In the table at right are some of the types of documents that can be used for verification:

Next month: Conclusion/The Decision and Appeal process

The DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization focused on advocacy and planning in DuPage County, Illinois and designer and trainer of Making the Connection: A Guide to Accessing Public Benefits. The DuPage Federation is affiliated with Northern Illinois University, Regional Development Institute. Questions can be directed to knelson@dupagefederation.org or cking@dupagefederation.org.

NAEH Releases 2007 Policy Guide

The National Alliance to End Homelessness has published a Policy Guide to help policymakers and advocates understand federal programs and policies regarding housing and homelessness. The 63-page guide includes information about relevant federal programs and proposals, including homelessness funding, proposals to reauthorize HUD’s McKinney-Vento homeless assistance programs, and information about funding levels of mainstream housing and services programs. The guide also includes several additional features, including:

- What We Know about Housing and Homelessness, a series of important facts on housing and homelessness;
- Homelessness Budget, which summarizes federal spending on housing and homelessness;
- Issue Briefs that describe the major policies and proposals related to specific subtopics of homelessness; and
- Policy Resource Guide, which includes information about dozens of studies and papers relevant to homelessness.

You can download the full report at: www.endhomelessness.org/files/1723_file_2007_policy_guide.pdf

For further information, contact NAEH at the address in Headlines Directory.
**The Retirement Research Foundation**

8765 W. Higgins Rd., Ste. 430  
Chicago, IL 60631-4170  
**Telephone:** (773) 714-8080  
**Contact:** Marilyn Hennessy, Pres.  
**FAX:** (773) 714-8089  
**E-mail:** info@rrf.org  
**Additional E-mail (for Marilyn Hennessy):** hennessey@rrf.org  
**URL:** www.rrf.org

**Type of grantmaker:** Independent foundation.  
**Total Giving (2005):** $7,211,040  
**Purpose and activities:** Support principally to improve the quality of life of older persons in the U.S.  
**Areas of interest:** Aging; Aging, centers/services; Employment; Geriatrics; Health care; Health organizations; Homeless; Homeless, human services; Human services; Nutrition; Public policy, research; Social sciences.  
**Geographic focus:** Includes Illinois; Indiana; Missouri.  
**Types of support:** Annual campaigns; Capital campaigns; Continuing support; Employee matching gifts; General/operating support; Program development; Scholarship funds; Sponsorships.  
**Application information:** Application form not required. Applicants should submit the following: 1) copy of IRS Determination Letter; 2) brief history of organization and description of its mission; 3) listing of board of directors, trustees, officers and other key people and their affiliations; 4) detailed description of project and amount of funding requested; 5) copy of current year’s organizational budget and/or project budget.  
**Initial approach:** Letter or proposal.  
**Copies of proposal:** 3  
**Board meeting date(s):** February, May, August, and October.  
**Deadline(s):** Submit proposal preferably in January, April, or July; deadlines February 1, May 1, and August 1.  
**Final notification:** 6 months

**Citations Source:** Foundation Center. (2007) Foundation Directory Online Professional. See: fdncenter.org for more including subscription information.

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**Nonprofit (Continued from page 3)**

Brandon Dohman  
Lumpkin Family Foundation  
121 S. 17th Street  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
217.235.3238 phone  
217.258.8444 fax  
brandon.dohman@consolidated.com  
www.lumpkinfoundation.org  
(See Private Resources on page 7)
Headlines Directory

Center for Community Change
1536 U Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 339-9380
http://www.communitychange.org

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
820 First Street, NE, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 408-1080
Fax: (202) 408-1056
http://www.cbpp.org

Coalition of Citizens With Disabilities
1325 S. Wabash, Suite 205
Chicago, IL 60605
http://www.enteract.com/~cch/

Corporation for Supportive Housing
203 N. Wabash, Suite 410
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (312) 332-6690
Fax: (312) 332-4198
Email: il@csbh.org
www.csbh.org

Food Research and Action Center
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, # 540
Washington, D.C. 20009
Phone: (202) 986-2200
Fax: (202) 986-2525
foodresearch@frac.org

Housing Action Illinois
11 E. Adams, Suite 1501
Chicago, IL 60603
Phone: (312) 939-6074
Fax: (312) 939-6822
http://housingactionil.org

Housing Assistance Council
1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 606
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 842-8600
Fax: (202) 347-3441
http://www.ruralhome.org

Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
301 S. 11th
Springfield, IL 62703
Phone: (217) 789-2830
Fax: (217) 789-1939
http://www.ilcadv.org

Illinois Coalition to End Homelessness
Matthew Hanafee, Executive Director
P.O. Box 3956
Oak Park, IL 60303-3956
Phone: (708) 263-3590
Email: ILHomeless@aol.com

Illinois Community Action Association
3435 Liberty Drive
Springfield, IL 62704
Phone: (217) 789-0125
Fax: (217) 789-0139
http://www.ilcaa.net

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
620 E. Adams, CPS-3
Springfield, IL 62701
Phone: (217) 785-6142
Fax: (217) 782-1206
http://www.commerce.state.il.us/

Illinois Department of Human Services
Homeless Services and Supportive Housing
400 W. Lawrence, 2C
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 836-5200
Fax: (312) 836-5286
supporthsg@aol.com

Illinois Housing Development Authority
401 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 900
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 836-5200
Fax: (312) 836-5286
TDD: (312) 836-5222
http://www.ihda.org/

National Alliance to End Homelessness
1518 K Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 638-1526
Fax: (202) 638-4646
E-mail: nahu@nah.org
http://www.nah.org

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003-1148
Phone: (202) 546-1969
Fax: (202) 546-2063
E-mail: ncvh@nchv.org
http://www.nchv.org/home.html

National Coalition for Homeless Providers Association
1012 14th Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 546-1969
Fax: (202) 546-2063
E-mail: nchv@nchv.org
http://www.nchv.org/home.html

National Community Reinvestment Coalition
333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20005-3406
Phone: (202) 393-5229
Fax: (202) 393-1973
E-mail: info@nlihc.org
http://www.nlihc.org

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
1012 14th Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 546-1969
Fax: (202) 546-2063
E-mail: nchv@nchv.org
http://www.nchv.org/home.html

National Law-Income Housing Coalition
& National Low Income Housing Information Service
727 15th St NW, 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 662-1530
Fax: (202) 393-1973
E-mail: info@nlihc.org
http://www.nlihc.org

National Rural Housing Coalition
601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 850
Washington, D.C. 20004
Phone: (202) 393-3229
Fax: (202) 393-3204
http://www.nrhcweb.org

Rural Development
2118 W. Park Ct, Suite A
Champaign, IL 61821
Phone: (217) 403-6222
Fax: (217) 403-6231

Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless
P.O. Box 955
801 N. Market
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: (618) 993-0094
Fax: (618) 993-4015
Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless
P.O. Box 955
801 N. Market
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: (618) 993-0094
Fax: (618) 993-4015

Supportive Housing Providers Association
3417 North Monticello
Marion, IL 62959
Phone: (618) 993-0094
Fax: (618) 993-4015

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Community Planning and Development
77 W. Jackson 24th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3507
Phone: (312) 353-1696
Fax: (312) 353-5417